

G. Burder sculp.

The Seasons attending on Devotion.

THE

RURAL CHRISTIAN.

To which are added

SYLVAN LETTERS;

or the PLEASURES *of a*

COUNTRY LIFE,

in PROSE *and* VERSE.

The Third Edition, Enlarged,
With occasional Notes.

By G. WRIGHT, *Esq.*
Author of Solitary Walks, Thoughts in Younger Life &c.



LONDON:

Printed for JAMES BUCKLAND, at the Buck,
No. 57. Pater Noster Row.
MDCCLXXXI.


BRITISH MUSEUM
DIEU ET MON DROIT

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM

EARL OF DARTMOUTH,

DESERVEDLY ESTEEMED

FOR HIS STEADY ADHERENCE TO,

AS WELL AS CONSTANT PATRONAGE

AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF

VIRTUE AND RELIGION,

THE FOLLOWING POEM AND LETTERS

ARE WITH ALL DUE SUBMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

Verſes to the Author of the *Rural Chriſtian*,

By a young Gentleman.

WITH equal pleaſure and ſurprize I find,
A youth in this degenerate land inclin'd,
To check the growing vices of the age,
And in *Religion's* ſacred cauſe engage;
A youth, whom virtuous themes with zeal inſpire,
And all his breaſt with pleaſing raptures fire;
Whoſe flowing numbers *rural* pleaſures ſing,
And ſweet reflexions from each ſubject bring.
Who dares to leave the too much beaten road,
Which leads from *virtue*, *piety*, and *God*;
Who dares to laſh the vices of the times,
And boldly criticiſe on public crimes;
Go on, dear youth*, the love of *truth* diffuſe,
And aid the triumphs of the *virtuous* muſe;
O may you with ſucceſs eſpouſe her cauſe,
While ſuch endeavours gain you juſt applauſe.

O. B.

---

* The Rural Chriſtian was written when the Author was a Youth.

To the AUTHOR of the *Rural Chriſtian*,

By a LADY.

HAIL youthful Bard, within whoſe every line,
Devotion pure, and Friendſhip ſweetly join;
Whoſe thoughts are elegant, and pen'd with grace,
In them the author's pious ſoul we trace;
A ſoul ſo pure that angels might deſcend
From heav'n, to call the *Rural Chriſtian*, Friend;
O while you paint a virgin's deep diſtreſs,
What heart-felt woes, my troubled ſoul oppreſs;
Methinks I ſee the lovely victim lie
In death's cold arms, and mark her cloſing eye;
Condemn'd, alas! unhappy maid, to prove,
Too ſtern a penance, for too ſoft a love*.
But when your muſe a loftier theme eſſays,
And ſounds in pleaſing numbers *friendſhip's* praiſe‡;
My ſoul enamour'd, joins th' enliv'ning ſong,
And feels thoſe raptures which your ſtrains prolong.
Go on, ſweet bard, while ſaints approve your lays,
To ſing the pleaſantneſs of wiſdom's ways;
May Heav'n ſucceed your pen, and peace attend your days.

* Alluding to Sylvan Letters, No. 5.
‡ Alluding to the Ode in Letter, 16.

THE

PREFACE.

DAVID, the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, introduces the *country* in ſeveral of his Pſalms, not only as the ſubject, but the place of his meditations, as in the 23d Pſalm and 2d verſe, *He maketh me to lie down in green paſtures, He leadeth me beſide the ſtill waters.* Rural ſcenes are the choſen retreats of the poet, the ſilent abodes of health, and quiet dwellings of meditation. where variety pleaſes the eye, retirement calms the ſoul, and ſolitude invites reflection*. Whilſt the noiſy town is ſwallowed up in purſuits after riches, honours, and amuſements, *here* calm felicity and undiſturbed tranquillity are enjoyed, far from the hurry of buſineſs, the toils of induſtry, and anxieties of gain.

NOT that diligence is incompatible with Religion, or affiduity an hindrance to devotion:

* To a mind intent upon its own improvement, ſolitude has charms incomparably more engaging than the entertainments preſented in the theatre, or the honours conferred in the drawing-room.
Hervey's Meditations, Vol. II.

tion: no, the ALMIGHTY has placed us in different ſtations; the filling up of which, to the beſt of our abilities, is part of that duty we owe to GOD, ourſelves, and the community.

THAT a man may be *in* the world and not *of* it, is an undoubted truth; and that the greater and more numerous the allurements to ſin are, the greater is the conqueſt, and more glorious the victory, cannot be denied. To be unmoved in the midſt of temptations, untainted in circles of pleaſure, and unreproachable in an age of licentiouſneſs, are the marks of true virtue and ſobriety; whilſt a ſtrict adherence to the precepts of morality, an obſervance of the laws of GOD, and living up to the doctrines of the Goſpel, are indubitable proofs of genuine godlineſs, and indicate the *real* Chriſtian.

YET it will be allowed by all, that the *beauties* of *nature*, and the wiſdom, order, and harmony of the great Creator's works, are moſt ſeen and beſt contemplated, in the *ſylvan* retirements of *rural* ſolitude, and more ſuited to the temper of a reflecting mind. If Providence then has given an inclination and opportunities to enjoy, and a deſire to improve a *retired* life, without endangering the future welfare of a

family, or the emolument of a riſing offſpring; wherein it can be ſtiled cenſurable or blame-worthy muſt be referred to the nice reſearchers into the ſecrets of the human mind.

THAT *Iſaac* went into the fields to meditate, the Scriptures inform us*; and that others may do the ſame, without injuring themſelves in particular, or ſociety in general, muſt be admitted.

THE following poem is offered as a companion to the contemplative Chriſtian in his walks in the *country*, to lead his thoughts from the different objects which may attract his view, to the great Creator of all things; while it evidences the benefits of Virtue and the pleaſures of *Religion*. On this account the author hopes (however he may be laughed at and deſpiſed by the unthinking and irreligious *many*‡) to gain the approbation of the wiſe, religious and diſcering *few*; to whom he would ever deſire to approve himſelf the *real*, as well as

Rural Chriſtian,

G. W.

FINCHLEY.
July 2, 1772.

---

* Gen. xxiv. 63.

‡ He that ſtrives univerſal affection to gain,
Shows a world of good-nature, but labours in vain.

To the Reader.

HOWEVER the *Rural Chriſtian* is principally calculated for the *Country*, it is not in the leaſt improper to be read by perſons reſiding in the *Metropolis*, who, by their ſeveral wealth-procuring avocations, may be neceſſarily detained in town, on the prudent and laudable deſigns of maintaining their reſpective families, or providing for their future accommodation and ſubſiſtence: however, they may not have an opportunity of paſſing the ſame objects, or viewing the ſcenes on which the reflections in the enſuing poem are made; yet, let them properly weigh, and carefully obſerve, the important admonitions it contains, and endeavour in like manner to ſpiritualize thoſe different employments they are engaged in*, as well as thoſe various accidents and occurrences they muſt daily hear, read, or meet with, in ſo populous a city; and the author doubts not, but they will find more real comfort, pleaſure, and ſatisfaction, in their own minds, from ſuch a practice than the world can either give or take away; or the worldling can poſſibly enjoy, when his corn, his wine, and his oil increaſe.

SOME

* Good thoughts can never be unſeaſonable, or too much entertained, while *piety* and *buſineſs* are taught to go hand in hand.

SOME perſons, who are well wiſhers to the intereſts of *Religion*, have occaſioned it to be ridiculed, and made themſelves laught at, by indiſcreetly introducing *ſpiritual* ſimilies and reflections, in a *mixt* company, met together, it may be, for *ſecular* or convivial purpoſes: this, the author would by no means be thought to recommend, as he eſteems it making too light with ſacred things, and the means in all probability, of *throwing pearls before ſwine*, according to the language of Scripture; but adviſes thoſe, who are of ſo ſerious a turn of mind, to have due regard to the *time*, *place*, and *company*.

To be in a praying or ſpiritualizing frame at all times, is one happy mark of *true* piety‡; but let not the Chriſtian think it any part of his duty, from hence, to act the enthuſiaſt; for though the Goſpel teaches us to *be all things to all men*, yet at the ſame time it ſays, *do all things with decency and order*. 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

‡ 1. Theſſalonians v. 17.

☞ We are not to omit *any* opportunity of doing *good*, either by words or actions, in every company; but let us remember we are to think *twice* before we ſpeak *once*, on *religious* as well as *moral* ſubjects.

ERRATA.

Page 194, Letter 26, read 24.
Page 205, Letter 25, read 26.

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THE

RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION,

A POEM.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK I.

Theſe are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this univerſal frame,
Thus wondrous fair: Thyſelf how wondrous then!
Ineffable; . . . . . *Par. Loſt.*]

THE ARGUMENT.

THE ſubject propoſed; an addreſs to the Almighty for his gracious aſſiſtance in the work; a ſummer's morn deſcribed; a walk in the fields; all the creation called on to praiſe the Lord. The tranſient dew reſembles fading beauty; the azure heavens an emblem of a ſpotleſs mind; directions for youth at their entrance into life; the ſun ſhining an emblem of the effects faith produces in believers. Bees, (Nature's chemiſts) *obſervations on them: the ſun an emblem of Jeſus Chriſt; the effects he produces in the moral world; a ſtorm of thunder and lightening deſcribed; running under trees for ſhelter compared to a ſinner's truſting in his own works, or the law for ſalvation. A call upon atheiſts to own the Lord; the fields repreſent poor ſinners under a ſenſe of ſin; the ſhortneſs of life; the ſtorm illuſtrated; the author's prayer for his readers.*

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN;
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.
BOOK I.

Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes,
Hor. Lib. II.

WHILE genial Summer clothes the neigh-
b'ring fields,
In ev'ry beauty which the country yields:
Near the ſoft murmurs of ſome purling ſtream,
Let *rural* pleaſures be my welcome theme.*

---

* To me be Nature's volume broad diſplay'd;
And to peruſe its all inſtructive page.
Or haply catching inſpiration thence,
Some eaſy paſſage, raptur'd to tranſlate,
My ſole delight; as thro' the falling gloom,
Penſive I ſtray, or with the riſing dawn,
On fancy's eagle wing excurſive ſoar. *Thompſon's Summer.*

Pſalm cxi. 2.

MAKER ſupreme! whoſe all prolific pow'r,
Is plainly ſeen in every op'ning flow'r;
Whoſe wiſdom ſhines in Nature's ample page,
My mind enlighten, and my thoughts engage.
Thou great Creator and the Guide of men,
Vouchſafe in mercy to direct my pen;
Teach me to ſing, and help me to declare
How great thy works, how manifold they are,
Thy ways how good; aſſiſt me, Grace divine,
Then ſhall thy praiſe reſound from line to line.

WHILE ſome the being of a GOD diſown,
And all events aſcribe to fate alone;
Let me attempt, far as a mortal can,
By nat'ral ſcenes to prove a GOD to man *;
Whom we as chriſtians LORD JEHOVAH call,
And daily own the firſt grand cauſe of all (*a*).

ETERNAL SPIRIT, aid my feeble muſe,
My breaſt, with wiſdom from above infuſe;

Teach

---

* . . . . What but GOD?
Inſpiring GOD! who boundleſs Spirit all,
And unremitting energy pervades,
Adjuſts, ſuſtains and agitates the whole. *Thompſon.*

(*a*) My proſtrate ſoul adores the preſent GOD;
Praiſe I a diſtant Deity? he tunes
My voice (if tun'd) the nerve that writes, ſuſtains,
Wrapt in his being, I reſound his praiſe. *Dr. Young.*

Teach me the path which thy own *Hervey* trod,
" *To look thro' Nature, up to Nature's* GOD;"
And while thy works my admiration raiſe,
Let me be loſt in wonder, love, and praiſe.

THE ſmiling morn, with ſtreaks of roſy light,
Has chas'd away the gloomy ſhades of night;
The bluſhing eaſt a crimſon radiance yields,
And dewy ſpangles glitter o'er the fields.*
The tuneful birds ſalute the op'ning day,
And ſtretch their warbling throats on ev'ry ſpray.
The riſing ſun begins to warm the air, (*a*)
And ſhepherds haſten to their fleecy care: (*n*)
The fog diſperſes at th' approach of morn,
And gentle breezes fan the waving corn;
The buſy bee to every bloſſom flies,
Whilſt yellow treaſure loads its little thighs;

---

* Now morn her roſy ſteps in th' eaſtern clime
Advancing, ſow'd the earth with orient pearl.
Par. Loſt. b. 5th.

(*a*) All Nature laughs, the groves are freſh and fair,
The ſun's mild luſtre warms the vital air.
Pope's Paſtorals.

(*n*) . . . . The ſoon-clad ſhepherd leaves
His mo ſy cottage, where with peace he dwells.
Thompſon's Spring.

Induſtr'ous ants tread nimbly o'er the ground,
The verdant plains with lowing herds reſound,
And bount'ous heav'n makes all things ſmile around.

Now let me walk where roving fancy leads,
In bleating paſtures or ſequeſter'd meads,*
On riſing hills, or paſs the ſilent vale,
For meditation ſuits the peaceful dale.
Here, with an inward pleaſure, may I trace
The wond'rous footſteps of almighty Grace.
Who, at the firſt, primeval ſilence broke,
And worlds unnumber'd into being ſpoke,
Whoſe wiſdom form'd the great amazing plan,
And by his powerful word, created man. (a)
'Tis He alone who rules the checker'd year,
Calls forth the ſeaſons, and they all appear;
Theſe, as they change, are but the *varied* GOD, (n)
They come and go at his almighty nod.

Let

---

* . . . . . Now from the town,
Buried in ſmoke, and ſleep, and noiſome damps,
Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,
Where freſhneſs breathes. *Thompſon's Spring.*

(a) Geneſis i. 26.

(n) Theſe as they change, Almighty Father! theſe
Are but the varied GOD. *Thompſon's Hymn*, l. 1.

Let all creation praiſe its Maker's name;
Ye rural ſcenes, his handy works proclaim.*

Bleſs thou the Lord, my ſoul, his praiſes ſing,
And grateful off'rings to his temple bring;
Who has preſerv'd thee to the preſent day,
And as a watchful ſhepherd guides thy way;
At night to ſhield thee from the foe's alarms,
Lays underneath thee everlaſting arms.
'Tis He alone my riſing thoughts employs
On heav'nly ſubjects and celeſtial joys:
In ſultry noon, reclin'd in yonder grove,
The banner He ſpreads over me is love:
In every field his goodneſs I ſurvey,
And trace his footſteps in the opening day.

As morn advances, ſee the proſpects riſe,
The lofty mountains ſeem to touch the ſkies;
The diſtant hills a blueiſh aſpect wear,
And warbling birds ſalute the fragrant air (a)

* Soft roll your incenſe, herbs and fruits and flowers,
In mingled clouds to Him whoſe ſun exalts,
Whoſe breath perfumes you, and whoſe pencil paints.
Thompſon's Hymn, l. 56.

(a) Hear how the birds, on ev'ry blooming ſpray,
With joyous muſic wake the dawning day.
Pope's Paſtorals.

The glitt'ring dews, which deck the verdant lawn,
With *Nature's jewels*, ſcarce ſurvive the dawn; (*v*)
O'ercome with heat they quickly diſappear,
And ſoon are gone like all enjoyments here.

THUS youthful charms by ſickneſs are decay'd:
Thus death ere long will every beauty fade.
Then prize, ye Fair, and daily ſtrive to find
Thoſe laſting beauties of a *virtuous* mind;
Wiſdom and prudence join'd with inward grace,
Theſe far excel the moſt alluring face;*
As ſparkling diamonds which your hands adorn,
Outvie the dewy ſpangles of a ſummer's morn. (*a*)

THE ſpacious heav'ns in azure robes are dreſt,
Inſtructive emblem of a virtuous breaſt:
Unmov'd by troubles, clear from wilful ſin,
Without, good nature, all divine within; (*n*)
From anxious cares and vicious paſſions free,
Such let your mind, and ſuch your temper be.

O MAY

(*v*) Hoſea vi. 4. * Proverbs xxxi. 30.

(*a*) Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with roſy light the dewy lawn. *Pope's Homer.*

(*n*) Emblem inſtructive of the virtuous man,
Who keeps his temper'd mind ſerene and pure,
And every paſſion aptly harmoniz'd. *Thompſon's Summer.*

O MAY each Britiſh youth, with Virtue fir'd
With love of wiſdom and of truth inſpir'd
Shine like the morn in ev'ry inward grace,
And promiſe fair to run the *chriſtian* race.
Let true Religion firſt your care engage, (*n*)
Dare to be virtuous in a vicious age.
Mind not the impious ſcoff nor idle ſneer;
But, as enabled, (*a*) boldly perſevere
In wiſdom's ways, for pleaſures dwell therein,*
Unknown to ſinners, and eſtrang'd to ſin:
Hate youthful follies with a juſt diſdain,
Shun carnal pleaſures, leſt they prove your bane; (*t*)
And ſtrive to act in every ſtation well,
For after death your ſouls muſt ever dwell
With Saints in Heaven, or with fiends in hell. (*v*)

As now the ſun his chearing beams diſplays,
Enlivening Nature with his quickening rays;
So in awaken'd ſouls does Faith appear,
Their hopes to animate, their doubts to clear (*x*)

(*n*) Matthew vi. 33.

(*a*) Look up to *Heaven* for aſſiſtance, for of *ourſelves* we cannot think a good thought, &c. James i. 5.

* Prov. iii. 17. (*t*) Rom. viii. 6. (*v*) John v. 29.

(*x*) Rom. 5. 1, 2.

Their griefs to ſoften, and their fears remove,
Their graces heighten, and their zeal improve;
To chear their ſouls, and raiſe their thoughts on high,
To teach them how to live, and how to die;
To warm their hearts with true ſeraphic love,
And give enlivening foretaſtes of the joys above. (*a*)

As heat encreaſes with the rolling hours,
Draws up the vapours, and expands the flow'rs;
So with thy childhood may thy follies ceaſe,
So may thy wiſdom with thy years encreaſe;
So may religion early warm thy ſoul,
Encourage, actuate, and chear the whole.
May uſeful knowledge thus thy mind extend,
Thy manners poliſh, and thy actions mend.
Improve thy judgment, and thy thoughts refine,
Thy wand'ring ſteps to Wiſdom's ways incline:
Make ev'ry hour a critic on the paſt,
And live each day as tho' it were your laſt. (*n*)

As thro' the vari'gated fields I ſtray,
A verdant border lines the devious way;

While

(*a*) Hebrews xi. 1. to the 14th verſe.

(*n*) But you with pleaſure own your errors paſt,
And make each day a critic on the laſt.
Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm.

While flow'rs that on each ſide ſpontaneous grow,
The fine embroidery of Nature ſhow. (v)
Here various colours catch the roving eye,
But late unfolded by the genial ſky.
Here bees (great *Nature's chemiſts*) draw their ſweets
From every bloſſom in theſe calm retreats.

THUS, O my ſoul, may'ſt thou improvement gain
From every object on the rural plain: (x)
Thus from the ſacred pages daily find
Food for the comfort of thy troubled mind.
And in believing, thus extract a joy,
Which this world cannot give, nor hell deſtroy. (z)

THE chearful ſun, the reſervoir of light,
Whoſe preſence makes the day, and abſence, night,

(v) Each herb the footſteps of GOD's wiſdom bears,
And every blade of graſs his power declares *Rapin.*

(x) . . . . . Every object of creation,
Can furniſh hints for contemplation;
And from the moſt minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean. *Gay.*

(z) Rom. xv. 13. 1 Pet. i. 8.

Faintly reſembles in its noon-day blaze,
The Sun of Righteouſneſs; * whoſe healing rays
Enlivening guilty ſouls, like miſts diſperſe
The baleful vapours of the fatal curſe.
Our ſtate of ign'rance (as the gloomy ſhades
At day-break vaniſh) quickly He pervades;
Our doubts, like exhalations, die away,
Before this Regent of *eternal* day. (*a*)
Our glimm'ring reaſon, ſublunary ſpark,
Without His influence, leaves us in the dark, (*n*)
And all its followers into ruin leads,
(Like *unctuous vapours* in the watry meads) (*v*)
But when with ſtrength aſſiſted from above,
Points to thoſe regions of eternal love, (*x*)
Where true believers, (who, like ſtars on earth,
The bleſt partakers of the *ſecond* birth)

Trans-

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* Great ſource of day! beſt image here below
Of thy Creator. *Thompſon's Hymn.*

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 17.

(*n*) A moraliſt may be a good reaſoner, but no chriſtian; religion cannot be without *reaſon*, but reaſon may be and often is in that man who has no ſenſe of religion on his ſoul; witneſs the deep learned infidels and ſpeculative atheiſts of every age.

(*v*) See the note in page 72, of Hervey's Contemplations on the Night.

(*x*) . . . So reaſon's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to aſſure our doubtful way,
But guide us upwards to a better day.
Dryden.

Transform'd to ſuns, ſhall unmoleſted ſhine,
Thro' all eternity with rays divine.*

But lo! a ſtorm ſeems brooding in the air,
To yonder cot for ſhelter I'll repair:
The calm abode of innocence and health,
To pain a ſtranger, and unknown to wealth.
The gathering clouds in darkneſs hide the ſky,
Affrighted hinds to trees for ſhelter fly,
Whoſe ſpreading branches draw the lightning down,
Which ſwift deſcending kills the heedleſs clown.
Like the good works the ſinner pleads in vain, (*a*)
Or his own righteouſneſs his fatal bane;

Which

* If there is a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, (which appears abſolutely neceſſary from the unequal diſtribution of them here below) the *chriſtian* muſt certainly be accounted the happieſt man, as having the promiſe of *this* life and that which is to come.

1 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. xiii. 43. Daniel xii. 3.

(*a*) Epheſ. ii. 8, 9.

If the ſinner could be ſaved by his *own* good works, the obedience and death of CHRIST, as an atonement for ſin, was entirely ſuperfluous; but GOD forbid any of my readers ſhould be left to entertain ſuch a dangerous ſuppoſition. Good works are neceſſary to evidence our chriſtianity ſincere, and cannot but be acceptable to, and approved of by GOD, but make no part of our title to ſalvation, becauſe the ſinner pleads *mercy* at the throne of Grace, and not *merit*, unleſs it is that of CHRIST'S.

Which, while he blindly truſts in, lets him fall
Beyond the reach of even mercy's call.*
So thoſe who ſeek forgiveneſs from the law,
Which calls for death for every ſingle flaw; (*a*)
(Deſpiſing JESUS, who, in wond'rous grace,
Came down and died to ſave a ſinful race, (*n*)
When plac'd before JEHOVAH's awful throne,
Struck with remorſe, repeating groan for groan,
Whilſt judg'd by Him, whom they on earth contemn'd)
Shall by *this* very *law* be try'd, be caſt, condemn'd. (*t*)

LOUD claps of thunder introduce the ſtorm,
And lightnings flaſh in every dreadful form;
O may they ſtrike conviction in the ſoul,
And GOD be honour'd while the thunders roll!
Ye harden'd ſinners, hear His voice and live,
'Tis only He can ſpeak the word forgive. (*x*)
Ye happy ſouls, who on His name depend,
Fear not the ſtorm, for JESUS is your friend:

By

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* Job viii. 13, 14. Eccleſiaſt. xi 3.

(*a*) Gal. iii. 10, 11.

(*n*) Matthew xviii. 11. Luke xix. 10.

(*t*) Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. John xii 48.

(*x*) Mark ii. 7.

By faith relying on His ſovereign grace,
He'll prove your rock, your ſhield, your hiding
place;*
And when grim death ſhall cloſe your weary eyes,
Conduct you ſafely into happier ſkies,
Where troubles ceaſe which haunt this earthly ball,
There GOD in CHRIST will be your all in all. (a)

IN every clap you hear th' Almighty's word, (n)
In every flaſh you ſee His blazing ſword (v).
Where's now the atheiſt, who would fain advance
That helliſh doctrine, all things came by
Chance; (e)
Who vainly ſtrives his reaſon to perſuade,
That every ſyſtem by itſelf was made.

Preſump-

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* Iſaiah xxxii. 2. Pſ. lxxxiv. 11.

The believer is not ſaved by any works of his own, tho' ever ſo good, nor *for*, but *in* believing on JESUS CHRIST, as the way and means appointed by the Father; therefore Paul ſays, *By grace ye are ſaved, thro' faith, yet not of yourſelves, it is the gift of* GOD, Eph. ii. 8.

(a) Col. iii. 4, 11. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

(n) See Hervey's Deſcant on the Creation, p. 254.

(v) The thunder is His voice, and the red flaſh
His ſpeedy ſword of juſtice *Thompſon's Spring.*

The author gratefully acknowledges having received much aſſiſtance in compoſing the following work, from Mr. *Thompſon's* excellent poem on the Seaſons

(e) See the Rural Chriſtian's Soliloquy on the Beauties of Nature, line 26.

Preſumptuous man! what—diſbelieve a God?
Now trembling come, behold His flaming rod:
Convinc'd He reigns, implore with inward grief,
"Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."*
Whilſt lightnings flaſh, or thunders roll around,
And echoing clouds retain the awful ſound,
O come, thou ſelf-deceiver, humbly fall
Before His throne; attend the gracious call,
And own the great I AM, who made both thee and all. (a)

Ah! there's another flaſh, the ſearching light
Pervades the cottage and affects the ſight;
Chills every nerve, and ſtrikes thro' every vein
A trembling dread; whilſt o'er the gloomy plain
The ſtorm deſcending, ſpreads thick horrors round,
And peals of rattling thunder ſhake the hollow ground. (n)

Thus the poor chriſtian under ſenſe of ſin
When doubts prevail, finds all is dark within;
While

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* Mark ix. 23. 24. (a) John i. 3. Col. i. 16.

(n) This orb's wide frame with the convulſion ſhakes,
Oft opens in the ſtorm and often cracks;
Horror, amazement, and deſpair appear,
In all the hideous forms which mortals fear;
Exploded thunder tears the embowel'd ſky,
And ſulph'rous flames a diſmal day ſupply.

Blackmore.

While ſatan drives him into ſad deſpair,
He ſeeks for comfort, but no comfort's there:
Conviction's flaſhes only ſerve to ſhow,
Amidſt the darkneſs, ſcenes of greater woe;
His guilt, how heinous, and how ſtrong his foe!

OBSERVE the change! how dull the country ſeems,
When clouds obſcure the ſun's enliv'ning beams
While diſtant proſpects, view'd with great delight,
Whelm'd by the tempeſt, vaniſh from the ſight.
Where e'er I look all nature ſeems forlorn,
The flocks and herds, the fields and meadows mourn.

So mourns the troubled ſoul, renew'd by grace,
When fears ariſe, and JESUS hides His face. ‖
He hears aghaſt, the ſoul that ſins ſhall die,
Aſham'd and hopeleſs, knows not where to fly;
'Till faith in exerciſe, makes this reply;
"Tho' CHRIST awhile His preſence may remove,
"He'll not forſake the objects of his love. †

"He

‖ *David*'s language under the hidings of GOD's countenance was, *Will the Lord caſt off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* Pſalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

† Deuteronomy xxxi. 6. 8.

" He ever lives to plead the ſinner's cauſe,*
" Who ſeeks His favour and obeys His laws,
" Who takes Him only for his truſt and guide,
" For ſuch He ſuffer'd, and for ſuch He died."
By faith beholding CHRIST, his doubtings ceaſe,
Hope calms his fears, and all within is peace. (a)

BUT ſee! the neighb'ring vallies ſmoke with rain,
The raging tempeſt ſweeps along the plain,
Surrounds the cottage of the village ſwain;
While rural ſports no longer fill the place,
But ghaſtly fear appears in every face.

So when afflictions ſeize the *guilty* ſoul,
And fell diſtempers rage without controul;
If not delirious, O what words can paint
His inward horror, all expreſſion's faint;
Satan upbraids him, there's no hope for you,
Conſcience preſents his numerous crimes to view! (t)

What

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* Heb. vii. 25. (a) Ib. vi. 18, 19.

(t) Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die. *Young.*

Religion will afford her followers living comforts in dying moments, but vice can yield nothing to her votaries at ſuch a time, but what will aggravate their deſpair; therefore prays the Prophet, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.*

Numb. xxiii. 10.

What mercies ſlighted, and what grace abus'd;
He cannot pray, his thoughts are all confus'd.
In vain phyſicians try their healing arts,
Thro' ev'ry vein the raging fever darts;
His pains increaſe, his dreadful end is near,
Yet nought to hope for, but has all to fear.*
No GOD to go to, (*a*) Oh! how ſad the thought!
No plea for mercy when to judgment brought;
Without a promiſe which might comfort yield,
When death has got the laſt commiſſion ſeal'd; (*n*)
Without a Saviour able to engage,
To hide him from an injur'd Sov'reign's rage;
Without a friend to make his life his care,
To mourn his ſorrows, or his pains to ſhare;
None, all around him, who his caſe bemoan,
Or make (by ſympathy) his griefs their own.

Thus

* Pſalm lxxiii. 19. Pſ. xxxiv. 21.

(*a*) Prov. xv. 29.

(*n*) Among the numerous advantages the chriſtian has over the men of the world, are the following: When laid on a ſick bed or in the views of death and a future ſtate, he has a GOD to pray to whoſe ears are ever open to his people's cries; a promiſe of mercy to truſt in for his encouragement, and a REDEEMER to procure him pardon and ſalvation at the judgment day, which reviving conſiderations ſupport and animate him, when the world and all things in it, cannot yield him the leaſt conſolation, and make him ſay with the Apoſtle Paul, when taking leave of all terreſtrial enjoyments, *To die is gain*; to theſe pleaſing reflections the ſinner is an entire ſtranger, and therefore of ſuch a one it is declared in Scripture, *There is no hope in his death.* Prov. v. 23.

Thus wretched ſinners, who their GOD deny,
And for ſalvation on *themſelves* rely,
Live unbelov'd, and unlamented die.

THE flocks and herds that fed on yonder ground,
Are ſwept away and in the torrent drown'd.
Th' induſtrious huſbandman to ſloth unknown,
Struggles with death in meadows late his own.

See how precarious is the life of man,
Short and uncertain is our earthly ſpan;
A few more years, or weeks, or moments paſt,
And you (tho' now in health) may breathe your laſt;*
For know, O man, when 'tis thy Maker's will
"*A fly, a grape-ſtone, or a hair may kill.*" (*a*)
When Nature's foe receives the dire command,
None can elude or ſtay the tyrant's hand. (*n*)
Thou muſt not, youth, on *numerous* years depend,
For unknown accidents thy ſteps attend;

Diſ-

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* Job vii. 1, 6. Luke xii. 20.

(*a*) Prior's Variety of Deaths. (*n*) Pſ. lxxxix. 48.

The thought of the uncertainty of life and certainty of death, ſhould perſuade young and old, rich and poor, to endeavour to be always in habitual as well as actual readineſs for their great change. Mark xiii. 35, 36, 37.

Diſorders numberleſs await thee here,
Thy greateſt pleaſures may thy bane appear.
Some ſudden illneſs ſoon may ſtop thy breath,
And prove an inlet to *eternal* death.*
The *old muſt* go, yet prize the preſent day,
For 'tis as certain that the *younger* may. (*a*)
Health, like the ſun, is haſtening to its goal,
Storms of diſtreſs may overtake thy ſoul, (*n*)
And thy vain hopes (as on the billows toſt,
A ſcatter'd fleet) may be forever loſt. (*v*)

THE pleaſant proſpects now are ſeen no more,
But all around, a ſea without a ſhore;
The fields and hedges under water lie,
And travellers belated ſink and die,
Or hurried forward down the ſwelling wave,
In vain reſiſting, meet a watery grave.

LEARN

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* Rom. vii. 5. Eccleſ. ix. 12. Chap. viii. 6, 13.

(*a*) Eccleſ. xi. 9, 10. Chap. xii. 1.

(*n*) Job viii. 13, 14. Prov. x. 28. Chap. xi. 7.

(*v*) The roſe is fragrant but it fades in time,
The violet ſweet, but quickly paſt its prime;
White lillies hang their heads and ſoon decay,
And whiter ſnow in minutes melts away;
Such and ſo withering is our blooming youth.
. . . . . *Dryden.*

LEARN hence how great the danger to delay
Unfeign'd repentance 'till a future day,*
Which ne'er may come, to your eternal coſt;
For he who dies in ſin, *forever*'s loſt. (*a*)
Your day of life will ſhortly have an end, (*n*)
Dark clouds of ſickneſs may a ſtorm portend:
The preſent hours will ne'er return again,
Your ſun may ſet, or be eclips'd in pain;
The paſſing day you now with folly ſlight,
May quickly end in an *eternal* night; (*v*)
The evening ſoon will come, your race be o'er,
The places now you know, you'll know ere long no more.

BUT ſee! the rivers o'er the vallies ſpread,
And fiſhes ſwim where lately oxen fed.
Think, while this tempeſt overflows the land,
A far more dreadful ſtorm is near at hand;
For which, if not prepar'd, you'll ſurely dwell
In endleſs flames, with ſouls accurs'd in hell. (*x*)

As

* Luke xiii. 3. John iii. 36.

(*a*) Eccleſ. xi. 3. (*n*) Rom. xiii. 12.

(*v*) No one ever repented giving himſelf up to GOD too *ſoon*, but many that they put it off 'till it was too *late*; one ſinner was pardoned at the laſt hour, that none might *deſpair*, and only *one*, that none might *preſume*. Luke xxiii. 43.

(*x*) Matt. xxv. 41.

As waters cover now the fertile ground,
May true contrition thus thine heart ſurround,
And in its current all thy ſins be drown'd. (a)
May thunders of conviction ſhake thy ſoul,
And thro' thy breaſt awakening terrors roll.
While conſcience flaſhes o'er thy guilty mind,
And floods of tears an eaſy paſſage find;
May *ſeas* * of comfort overwhelm thy pains,
And virtue dwell where vice at preſent reigns.

This

(a) One would think there needed no other arguments to move a ſinner to repentance, than to tell him, unleſs he repents he ſhall certainly periſh; and if he does repent timely and ſincerely, by living a life of piety and virtue, he ſhall be forgiven and ſaved. He who truly repents, is greatly ſorrowful for his paſt ſins, not with a ſuperficial ſigh or tear, but a pungent afflictive ſorrow, which excites a man not only to hate the ſin, but teaches him to mourn it before GOD, and earneſtly beg the forgiveneſs of it.

Sir Richard Steele.

When ſinners mourn for ſin, Heav'n owns the tears,
Approves the ſorrow and diſpels their fears;
The LORD with pity views them from above,
Hears their complaints and anſwers them in love;
And while by faith their hopes on CHRIST are built,
A Saviour's precious blood abſolves their guilt;
His ſpotleſs righteouſneſs becomes their plea,
And GOD well pleas'd accepts and ſets them free;
In mercy pardons what they've done amiſs,
And makes them heirs of everlaſting bliſs.

Rom. viii. 1, 16, 17.

* The reader will excuſe the impropriety of the expreſſion, in order to carry on the allegory.

This deluge, like th' o'erflowing Nile, (*a*)
Shall make thee fruitful prove;
Thy ſoul to JESUS reconcile,
And fill thee with his love.* 330

(*a*) That part of Ægypt where the Nile is (being ſeldom watered by ſhowers) Providence ſo orders it, that the Nile overflows its banks once a year, by which the country becomes healthy and fruitful, which otherwiſe would be but as a barren deſart.

Thompſon's Travels.

* The late ingenious Dr. *Watts*, in his 51ſt Pſalm, has theſe beautiful lines on a repenting ſinner.

Shew pity, LORD, O LORD, forgive,
Let a repenting ſinner live;
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a ſinner truſt in Thee?
O may Thy love inſpire my tongue,
Salvation ſhall be all my ſong;
And all my pow'rs ſhall join to bleſs
The LORD my ſtrength and righteouſneſs.

End of the FIRST BOOK.

THE

RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION,

BOOK II.

. . . . . I solitary court
The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
Of nature ever open; aiming thence,
Warm from the heart to learn the moral song. *Thompson.*

THE ARGUMENT.

THE ſtorm over, the rainbow appears, compared to a promiſe ſent home to the believer under ſickneſs, or a reprieve to a condemned malefactor; an addreſs to Devotion; deſcription of the country after the waters are abated; a ſimile; ſong of praiſe and thankſgiving; the Trinity invoked on the behalf of ſinners; the benefits of prayer, and the object of it pointed out; a walk through the meadows; the Almighty appears in all His works; clouds a ſhelter from heat, the ſad conſequences of them in a ſtorm, reflections thereon; noon deſcribed; an addreſs to the Redeemer; heat decays flowers; ſickneſs deſtroys beauty; Zephalinda's *death, a thoughtleſs young woman; a grove deſcribed; a ſolemn ſong and prayer to God.*

THE RURAL CHRISTIAN:

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK II.

Serenitas poſt tempeſtatem : poſt mortem, vita. [*See line* 38.]

THE lightnings ceaſe, the thunders roll no more,
The breaking clouds proclaim the tempeſt o'er,
While leſs'ning waters check our reſtleſs fears,
And in the *South* the cov'nant bow appears*;
Like a ſweet promiſe ſent to chear the ſoul,
O'er whom the waves of ſharp affliction roll (*a*),
Or as the welcome news of a reprieve
To a poor wretch whom ſatan's wiles deceive;

* Jove's wondrous bow of three celeſtial dyes,
Plac'd as a ſign to man, amidſt the ſkies.
Pope's Homer.

(*a*) So chears ſome pious ſaint a dying ſinner,
(Who trembled at the thoughts of pains to come)
With Heav'n's forgiveneſs, and the hopes of mercy.
Mr. *Rowe.*

Condemn'd by juſtice, near his ſhameful end,
In mercy's pardon'd, and ſtill lives to mend; (*v*)
O grant, all-gracious Heav'n! his future days
May be employ'd in grateful ſongs of praiſe;
While deep contrition fills his troubled mind,
May he forgiveneſs thro' the SAVIOUR find.
Cleanſe thou his ſoul, O GOD! whoſe mighty hand
Has call'd the waters off the fertile land;
And give him grace, which like the bow may prove
A conſtant ſign of thy *preſerving* love;*
From his polluted heart take every ſtain,
And ne'er permit him, LORD! to ſin again.

ASSIST me, pure Devotion, while I trace
The GOD of Nature and the God of Grace
Thro' all his works. (*a*) O thou celeſtial maid,
Now condeſcend to grant thy ſacred aid;
Inſtruct a youthful bard, (*n*) in lofty lays
To ſing the great Almighty Maker's praiſe.

THE plains forſaken by the floods appear
In all the beauties of the ſmiling year;

The

(*v*) This refers to an unhappy young man, who under condemnation for a highway robbery, had a reprieve ſent him at the place of execution. * Gen. ix. 13, 14, 15, 16.

(*a*) True; all things ſpeak a GOD;
Take GOD from nature, nothing great is left. *Dr. Young.*

(*n*) The author was about 22 years of age when he wrote this treatiſe.

The fields their variegated robes renew,
And pleaſant proſpects riſe again to view;
The diſtant meads their verdant clothing wear,
And tuneful birds fly warbling thro' the air;
The neighbouring vallies late by floods oppreſt,
In ſight appear, in deeper verdure dreſt.

LIKE the true chriſtian whom the rod refines,*
Or as the ſun eclips'd, the brighter ſhines,
So may'ſt thou, reader, freed from every ſin,
When death arrives, a happier life begin;
Where ſtorms and tempeſts ſhall forever ceaſe,
In endleſs regions of eternal peace.
(When clouds of doubt and dark'ning fears are o'er)
There may'ſt thou ſhine to be eclips'd no more.(a)

THE ſun appearing dries the humid earth,
And village ſwains reſume their rural mirth;
While joy and gratitude their looks declare,
For GOD's protecting and peculiar care:
Let me, with rev'rence, join to praiſe His name;
Come, grateful love, and all my breaſt inflame.

WHEN riſing waters ſpread deſtruction round,
And ſwelling billows men and cattle drownd;

* Iſ. xlviii. 10. Zach. xiii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 7. Mal. iii. 3.
(a) Matt. xiii. 43. Dan. xii. 3.

When certain death appear'd ſo near in view,
He interpos'd, and ſtraight the floods withdrew.
At His command the boiſt'rous winds are ſtill,
The raging ſtorm obeys His mighty will :*
He ſpeaks, and lo ! the tempeſt hears his voice, (a)
His gracious words the delug'd earth rejoice.

O SPEAK to ſinners overwhelm'd in ſin,
And ſtill the ſtorm which daily rage within ;
Call off their thoughts from fixing here below,
Change thou their hearts and baniſh ev'ry woe.

THOU Sun of Righteouſneſs, ariſe and ſhine,
Diſperſe their fears with quick'ning rays divine ;
Clear up their doubts, thoſe heavy clouds diſpel,
Forgive their ſins which ſink them down to hell ;
Teach them to mourn the evil of their ways,
Truſt in thy merits, and proclaim thy praiſe ;
While echoing earth their grateful ſong retains,
And JESU's name fills all the liſt'ning plains.

ETERNAL SPIRIT, melt their ſouls to love,
Set their affections more on things above ;
O cleanſe

* Job xxxviii. 8, 10, 11. Pſalm civ. 6, 7, 8, 9.

(a) The chriſtian in every trouble finds comfort from the reflection, that the GOD in whom he truſts, has all nature at his command, and the keys of death, hell, and the grave in his poſſeſſion ; and not only is *able* but as *willing* to make all things work together for his good. Dan. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 28.

O cleanſe their ſtubborn hearts defil'd with guilt,
And may their hopes be all on JESUS built.*
Their natures purify, by ſin deprav'd,
Their perſons juſtify, by vice enſlav'd;
Renew them wholly and throughout by grace,
In ſoul and body, every ſtain efface;
Comfort their minds and teach them how to pray,
For of themſelves they know not what to ſay;
Help them to come with boldneſs to the throne,
And humbly make their various troubles known
To Him, who ever lives the head and corner ſtone.

BY pray'er believers ſweet communion gain;
Aſk and receive, none aſk, by *faith* in vain; (*a*)
This is the key which to a ſinful race,
Unlocks the treaſures of eternal grace: (*n*)
By this alone, thro' JESUS, we receive
The greateſt bleſſings that a GOD can give (*v*).

C 4 THENCE

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* Rom, xv. 12. 1 John v. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

There is no other name given under Heaven and among men, whereby we can be ſaved, but the name of JESUS, *no other foundation can any man lay, than that is laid which is* JESUS CHRIST.

Acts iv. 12. (*a*) 1 Matt. xxi. 22.

(*n*) *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* James v. 16, 17, 18.

(*v*) Matt. vii. 7. Mark xi. 24.

A ſoul in commerce with her GOD, is Heav'n;
Feels not the tumults and the ſhocks of life;
The whirls of paſſion, and the ſtrokes of heart. *Dr. Young.*

THENCE learn in ev'ry trouble where to go,
Put not your confidence in things below;
ON CHRIST depend, to Him for ſuccour fly,
Believe in Him *alone*, that when you die,
You may thro' Him eternal life obtain,
Who died on *earth*, that we in *Heav'n* might reign.*

As thro' the verdant meads I paſs along,
Far from the crouded city's noiſy throng;
With ſecret pleaſure all around I view,
The works of GOD, ſtupendous, wiſe and true; (*a*)
The trees, the birds, and every beauteous flow'r,
Declare His wiſdom and proclaim His pow'r;
Yon fields of corn His bounteous goodneſs ſhow, (*t*)
And winds, His plenty thro' the nations blow;
Meandring rivers as they gently glide,
His praiſes murmur; and on every ſide
The charms of nature riſing to the ſight,
Claim admiration, while they all unite
To bleſs the hand which brought thoſe ſcenes to light. (*v*)

So

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* John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Rev. i. 5, 6.

(*a*) Heb. i. 10. (*t*) Deut. xi. 14, 15.

(*v*) Nature attend! in adoration join,
And ardent raiſe one general ſong to HIM.
. . . . . Thomſon.

So thro' thy life may grace appear and ſhine,
With thy profeſſion may thy practice join,
To ſhew thy faith and prove thy birth *divine*.*
O may thy path like yonder chearing ray,
Still brighter ſhine unto the perfect day; (*a*)
And ev'ry ſore affliction only prove,
The means to fit thee for the world above. (*n*)

THE ſhifting clouds with watry ſtores replete,
In ſummer yield a ſhelter from the heat;
Or ſoftly melting into gentle ſhow'rs,
Refreſh the earth and chear the drooping flow'rs.
But when JEHOVAH gives the dread command,
To overwhelm a guilty ſinful land;
Like horrid cataracts they quick deſcend,
The rivers ſwell and in a deluge end. ‖
Thus every mercy he can ſoon remove,
And make our greateſt comforts, *curſes* prove.
Then let it, Chriſtian, be thy daily pray'r,
(However num'rous thy enjoyments are)

* *Faith without works is dead: ſhew me thy faith without thy works, and I'll ſhew thee my faith by my works*; by the fruit is the tree known: 'tis not merely *profeſſing* religion, but living up to the rules of it, that proves a man a chriſtian. Matt. xii. 33, 35, 37, Chap. vii. 21. (*a*) Prov. iv. 18.

(*n*) The great ſimilarity between theſe and ſeveral other lines in the following poem, together with the repetitions on the ſame ſubject, will not, it is hoped, be diſguſting; as the author's chief deſign thro' the whole, is to reconcile the chriſtian to every affliction he may meet with, by reminding him, there is a *need be* for all. 1 Pet. i. 6. ‖ Geneſis vii. 11, 12.

Moſt gracious GOD! from whom all goodneſs flows,
Bleſs thou the bleſſings which thine hand beſtows.*

BUT lo! the ſun hath gain'd the *middle* ſky,
The fleecy clouds his ardent preſence fly; (*a*)
Without a ſpot the azure Heav'ns appear,
Fair as the day and as the ſeaſon clear.
Now diſtant hills are ſcorch'd by ſultry beams,
And every riſing ground an *Ætna* ſeems. (*n*)
The lab'ring hind to ſome cool ſhade repairs,
And in his ſlumbers ſtill purſues his cares;
Whilſt lowing oxen with the bleating ſheep,
Beneath the trees or under hedges ſleep;
Aerial ſongſters ſeek the leafy groves,
And faintly warble out their little loves.
The penſive angler in yon cave reclines,
To ſweet repoſe his weary limbs reſigns,
While o'er the plain the ſun reſiſtleſs ſhines.

Thus ſhine, thou SON OF GOD, in ev'ry ſoul,
Burn up our vices and our ſins controul;

With

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* Prov. x. 22.

(*a*) 'Tis raging noon, and vertical the ſun
Darts on the head direct his forceful rays:
O'er heav'n and earth, far as the rang'ng eye
Can ſweep, a dazzling deluge reigns; and all
From pole to pole is undiſtinguiſh'd blaze. *Thomſon.*

(*n*) A burning mountain in Sicily, whoſe top is conſtantly enveloped in ſmoke.

With unremitting ardour let thy rays
(As graſs is wither'd by the noon-tide blaze*)
Deſtroy our evil habits, ere they grow,
And ripen into fruits of endleſs woe.

As now the thirſty ground in chinks appears,
And ſeems to aſk the clouds' refreſhing tears;
As hunted harts pant for the cooling brook,
So may our ſouls, alone to JESUS look (*a*);
And in that fountain open'd by Him lave,
Whoſe healing ſtreams the bleſt partakers ſave. (*n*)

BEFORE the heat the flow'ry race decay,
And all their beauties drooping fade away;
So fade the Fair when ſore afflictions reign,
And deadly fevers boil in every vein (*v*).
The Beauty then no longer boaſts her charms,
But each new pain produces freſh alarms.
While full of horrors by reflection led,
She mourns the time without improvement fled; ‖

* James i. 11. (*a*) Pſ. xlii. 1, 2. (*n*) Zac. xiii. 1.

(*v*) Who can unpitying ſee the flowery race
Shed by the morn, their new-fluſh'd bloom reſign
Before the parching beam? So fade the fair,
When fevers revel thro' their azure veins. *Thompſon.*

‖ Time waſted is exiſtence, us'd is life,
A moment we may need, when worlds want wealth
To buy. . . . . *Young's Night Thoughts.*

Or raving ſenſeleſs meets her dreadful end,
Without a GOD, a father, or a friend.*

So inconſid'rate *Zephalinda* died,
Juſt in the bloom of youth and beauty's pride;
Whoſe ſole delight was merely to be fine,
At balls, the play-houſe, or at court to ſhine;
Whoſe only aim to catch the roving eye,
With all the colours of a *ſummer*'s fly;
Her beaut'ous face but ſerv'd to make her vain,
And love of admiration prov'd her bane:
Returning late one evening from the play,
(Where oft ſhe went to paſs the hours away;
In each new faſhion ſure to be attir'd,
By coxcombs flatter'd, and by fools admir'd)
A dread diſorder ſeiz'd her tender frame,
And ſoon, *too* ſoon, her lovely form became
A feaſt for worms; without one moment giv'n,
To beg forgiveneſs, or prepare for Heav'n.
Thy late admirers and *pretended* friends,
Who waited on thy ſmiles for different ends,
Where are they now! O *Zephalinda* ſay?
For ever fled;—the well proportion'd clay

To

* Prov. xv. 29. Deut. xxxi. 17. Truſt not to a *death-bed* repentance, leſt being deprived of reaſon by the violence of diſorders, you are entirely prevented from improving your *latter* moments, and ruſh into an awful eternity unprepared.

To duſt returning, charms the ſight no more;
The pleaſing farce, the golden dream is o'er,
While the poor ſoul neglected takes her flight,
To doleful regions of *eternal* night.*
Learn hence, ye lively and engaging Fair,
To make your *minds* your chief, your only care;
For death, ere long, will cloſe the brighteſt eyes, (*t*)
But *Virtue*, Heav'n-born Virtue *never* dies. (*a*)

WHILST noon prevails I'll ſeek the neighb'ring grove,
There coolly-ſhaded unmoleſted rove,
Thro' devious walks and bowery mazes ſtray,
'Till Sol declining ſheds a milder day; (*n*)
Theſe calm retreats my contemplation aid,
Here lofty trees afford a pleaſing ſhade, (*v*)

And

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* Matt. viii. 12.

(*t*) Pſalm lxxxix. 4. Pſalm xlix. 14. Prov. xxxi 30.

Beauty like a flower ſoon fades; be concern'd then, ye virgins, like *Marcia*, to improve your charms with inward greatneſs, unaffected wiſdom, and ſanctity of manners. *Addiſon's Cato.*

(*a*) Be mental charms your never fading bloom,
Internal beauty will ſurvive the tomb.

(*n*) . . . . . 'Tis pleaſing thus
To wander thoughtful thro' the ſylvan grove,
At fragrant morn, ſcorch'd noon, or dewy eve.
Browne's Sunday Thoughts.

(*v*) Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
Of yonder grove, of wildeſt, largeſt growth;
That forming high in air, a woodland quire
Nods o'er the mount beneath. *Thompſon.*

And fragrant wild-flow'rs diſregarded bloom,
While birds unnotic'd warble thro' the gloom.
Along the center glides a purling ſtream,
Whoſe gentle murmurs well deſerve my theme.
Its flowery banks compoſe a rural ſeat,
In ſhades ſurrounded, and ſecur'd from heat;
Here the ſad lover oft repairs alone,
When evening comes to make his plaintive moan,
Or penſive wanders thro' the lonely meads,
Which way his melancholy temper leads;
On every tree he carves the much-lov'd name,
And idly calls them to atteſt his flame;
While jealous thoughts their poiſon ſwift impart,
And ſcenes of horrid rivals rend his aching heart.

O may the SAVIOUR's image, deep impreſt,
By the good Spirit, warm the reader's breaſt;
Inſpire his ſoul with love beyond compare,
And make him jealous of a rival there.*

As ent'ring Nature's Fane, it leads my ſoul,
To the great Architect who form'd the whole,
Whoſe mighty hand this verdant fabric rais'd,
Thro' ev'ry nation may His name be prais'd.

ON

* We cannot be too jealous of our thoughts, words or actions, knowing we have to do with a *jealous GOD*, who will take vengeance on them who know him not, and obey not the goſpel of his ſon, Exod. xx. 4, 5. Heb. x. 30.

On either ſide the black'ning ſhades increaſe,
Be huſh'd my fears, ye fancy'd horrors ceaſe;
This ſylvan temple is th' abode of peace.*
Here aged oaks appear in various rows,
There ſtately elms a verdant arch compoſe;
Whoſe ſpreading branches intermixt on high,
Prevent the ſunbeams and obſcure the ſky.
Here the ſweet ſongſters of the grove repair,
To ſhun the heat and nurſe their tender care;
Or crows in *rural* architecture ſkill'd,
Their pendent nurs'ries near each other build (*a*);
Whilſt far beneath, the bees aſſiduous roam,
Anxious to bear their waxen treaſures home;
And from each flow'r extract delicious juice,
By Nature taught for man's peculiar uſe.
Hence, ſluggard, learn, bid indolence away,
Redeem the time, improve the *preſent* day;
Another morn may never riſe to thee,
For on each moment hangs eternity. (*n*)

In woods and groves the patriarchs retir'd, (*v*)
To worſhip God with holy zeal inſpir'd; (*x*)

In

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* . . . . . At every ſtep
Solemn and ſlow, the ſhadows blacker fall,
And all is awful liſtning gloom around. *Thompſon.*

(*a*) . . . . . Who high amidſt the boughs
In early ſpring, his airy city builds. *Thompſon.*

(*n*) Matt. xxv. 13. (*v*) Gen. xxi. 33.

(*x*) Thus liv'd the patriarchal age of old,
Kings of the verdant plain and fleecy fold. *Brown.*

In ſuch retreats the hermit ſpent his days,
In heavenly contemplation, pray'r and praiſe;
And liv'd on nature's common, free from care,
His drink the ſpring, wild fruits his daily fare.*

HERE let me oft enjoy the cooling breeze,
From noon defended by umbrageous trees;
The pleaſing gloom invites to ſolemn thought,
Calls off the mind with vain ideas fraught,
To Him, who all things out of nothing brought. (t)

GOD of my life! whoſe every word's a law,
Impreſs my ſoul with reverential awe;
O Thou! array'd in robes of glorious light,
Ineffable,—aſſiſt my tow'ring flight;
Fain would I ſoar above *terreſtrial* things,
And ſing of Thee, Almighty King of kings!
Here in this grove approve my humble lays,
Forgive my failings, and accept my praiſe.

HAIL, Lord of Heav'n and earth, by all rever'd,
By ſaints ſurrounded, and by devils fear'd, (a)

To

* Far in a world, unknown to public view,
From youth to age a reverend *Hermit* grew;
The moſs his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the chryſtal well;
Remote from man, with GOD he paſt his days,
Pray'r all his buſineſs, all his pleaſure praiſe. *Parnell's Hermit.*

(t) Col. i. 16. (a) James ii. 19. Jude 14.

To whom the bright and ſpotleſs ſeraphs bend,
And round the throne thy great beheſts attend,
At whoſe dread footſtool angels bow the knee,
In deep proſtration to the ſacred *Three*;
JEHOVAH infinite! who reigns on high,
In mercy hear a trembling ſinner's cry.

THOU bidſt the ſun his chearing beams diſplay,
" Thou alſo mad'ſt the night, and Thou the day.
Sea, earth, air, heav'n, Thy boundleſs wiſdom ſhow,
Thy gracious will returning ſeaſons know;* 270
At thy command the fields are cloth'd with corn, (*t*)
And ſpreading leaves the lofty trees adorn;
The woods and groves with waving honors crown'd,
Diſplay Thy goodneſs; whilſt the birds reſound
From every bough Thy praiſe, all Nature's GOD!
Thou great firſt Cauſe! whoſe all-conſuming rod,
Shook o'er a guilty world ere long ſhall prove,
The juſt avenger of thy ſlighted love; (*a*)
O haſte the bleſſed time, Thou great Supreme!
When true religion like a mighty ſtream, (*n*) 280
Shall overflow this highly-favour'd land,
Bleſt with the choiceſt bleſſings of thine hand.

Engage

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* Dan. ii. 21. (*t*) Joel ii. 19. Pſ. cxlv. 15.

(*a*) Iſai. xi. 4. (*n*) Amos v. 24.

Engage our hearts to fear thy ſacred name,
With goſpel ardour every ſoul inflame;*
And may thy church and people here below,
As Leb'non flouriſh, and as cedars grow;
In grace increaſing daily more and more,
Like ſands for number on the ocean's ſhore.

GIVE to the King thy mighty judgments, LORD!
Long may he reign according to thy word;
The Queen his royal conſort truly bleſs,
(Give to their ſons and daughters, righteouſneſs)
May they the hearts of all their ſubjects gain,
And peace with plenty crown their happy reign.
Make, gracious GOD, their officers of ſtate
As truly *good* as thou haſt made them *great*;
Teach them to have (and that alone purſue)
The *real* intereſt of the land in view.

MAY young and old, the wealthy and the poor,
Thy favour, LORD! be earneſt to ſecure;
May thoſe who preach Thy word rejoice to ſee
Their labours bleſt, while thouſands flock to Thee;
May

* Shine, mighty GOD, on *Britain* ſhine,
With beams of heav'nly grace;
Reveal thy pow'r thro' all her coaſts,
And ſhew thy ſmiling face.
Amidſt our Iſle exalted high,
Do Thou our glory ſtand;
And like a wall of guardian fire,
Surround our fav'rite land. *Dr. Watts.*

May growing vice, ſubdu'd by grace decay,
And reign no more with arbitrary ſway.
May virtue long to all her gifts impart,
And love to GOD prevail in every heart; (*a*)
Grant we may ſtill thy choſen people be,
And after death forever reign with thee. (*n*)

(*a*) The author will not pretend to ſay, whether the *preſent* age is worſe or better than former times; but ſubmits it to be determined by the thinking and religious, whether (from the ſenſuality and diſſipation ſo prevalent among all ranks and degrees of men, and the lukewarmneſs, inattention and immorality of even thoſe who call themſelves *chriſtians*, in this land of goſpel privileges) there is not as much, if not more, occaſion than ever to adopt the above petitions for a ſpeedy and general reformation of manners.

(*n*) The chriſtian, as a loyal ſubject and good citizen, is bound to pray for the welfare and proſperity of that nation of which he is a part; indeed the ſacred writings not only point out this to be his indiſpenſible duty, but direct him in his petitions, to make uſe of the following:

Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteouſneſs unto the king's ſon, eſtabliſh thou his throne in righteouſneſs. Pſ. lxxii. 1.

Let the wickedneſs of the wicked come to an end, but eſtabliſh the juſt; then ſhall the nation yield her increaſe, and God, even our own God ſhall bleſs us, and all the ends of the earth ſhall fear him. Pſ. vii. 9.

Cauſe the unclean ſpirit to paſs out of the land, and turn to the people a pure language, that they may call on the name of the Lord. Zec xiii. 2.

Turn us again, O Lord God of hoſts, cauſe thy face to ſhine and we ſhall be ſaved. Pſ. lxxx. 19.

Ariſe, O Lord, and let thine enemies be ſcattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee: Return, O Lord, to the many thouſands of Iſrael. Numb. x. 35, 36.

Let peace be within our walls, and proſperity within our palaces. Pſ. cxxii. 27.

Let ſtrife and diſcord thro' the nation ceaſe,
And *temp'ral* prove an earneſt of *eternal* peace.

Thus ſhall thy glorious Name be known,
And be by all ador'd;
Whilſt ev'ry kingdom joins to own
Thee, Univerſal LORD.

End of the SECOND BOOK.

45

THE

RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK III.

If chance the radiant ſun with farewell ſweet,
Extend his evening beam; the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Atteſt their joy, that hill and valley rings. *Par. Loſt.*

THE ARGUMENT.

THE afternoon described; bathing, with some reflections applicable to youth; an affecting story; an address to Heaven for the rising generation; Richmond-hill, with the prospects around it; address to the favourites of fortune; the pleasures of religion; an allegorical prayer; the evening's approach; time of walking; self-examination recommended; a summer's evening described; sun-set; night; darkness, an emblem of a guilty soul in despair; Altamont, a libertine; his death; virtue its own reward; the silence of the night represents the tranquility of a dying christian; the life and death of THERON, *a true believer; the happiest men are such who act their several parts best on the stage of life.*

THE

RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK III.

Vita hominum, levis umbra et vapor.

WITH raging noon the sultry hours are fled,
And milder beams a softer influence shed;
The birds again fly warbling thro' the air,
And hinds awake, to different toils repair;
The angler hastens with renew'd delight,
To throw the line and wait the pleasing bite;
The neighb'ring flocks no longer pant with heat,
But gently rising leave their cool retreat,
While distant mountains echo bleat for bleat.*

The

* 'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleats
Of flocks thick nibbling thro' the clover'd vale.
Thompson's Summer.

The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings. *Milton.*

THE rural ſwain now ſeeks the well-known pool,
Whoſe banks are ſhady, and whoſe water's cool;
There pleas'd, he wades along the yielding plain,
Health ſtrings his nerves and runs thro' ev'ry vein;
Surrounding buſhes hide him from the ſight,
While trees umbrageous ſcarce admit the light.
In yonder brook thus have I bath'd unſeen;
Where bending willows form a verdant ſcreen;
Preſerv'd, O GOD! by thine almighty arm,
Which ſaves in danger and ſecures from harm;
Upholds in ſickneſs and ſupports in grief,
In ev'ry trouble gives a ſure relief;
Which ſhall at laſt my ſtaff of comfort prove,
And bear my ſoul, thro' grace,* to realms of love. (t)

As ſome poor thoughtleſs youth, unlearnt in ſin,
When ſtrong unruly paſſions rage within:
(Whilſt pleaſure courts him with her ſyren ſmiles,
And vice enſnares him with her treach'rous wiles; (a)
Is checkt at firſt by modeſt-bluſhing ſhame,
And inexperienc'd trembles at the name;

In

* Rom. viii. 38, 39. A true chriſtian is warranted by ſcripture, to hope for ſalvation thro' the merits and mediation of a once crucified but now exalted LORD. Romans xviii. 34

(t) Heaven is all love; all joy in giving joy. *Dr. Young.*

(a) Prov. vii. 21, 22, 23.

In doubt and fear he ſlowly goes aſtray,
Till conſcience harden'd he forgets to pray,
And every good impreſſion ſins away.*

So on the margin of the brook I ſtand,
But half reſolv'd to quit the ſafer land;
Shiv'ring awhile th' inverted landſcape view,
And undetermin'd know not which to do;
At length by ſlow degrees I leave the ſhore,
And plunging headlong, fear the depth no more,

HENCE early learn to baniſh from within,
The *firſt* tho' *ſmall* appearances of ſin; ‖
Far from thy breaſt thy darling vice remove,
Shun bad companions leſt they fatal prove; (*a*)
Dare not to parley with th' infernal foe,
Nor think no farther but thus far to go; (*n*)
Of this deceit, young man, in time beware,
For 'tis in *youth*, too oft a *fatal* ſnare.
" *He that once ſins, like him who ſlides on ice,*
" *Goes ſwiftly down the ſlipp'ry paths of vice*;

* John xii. 40 Matt. xiii. 15.

‖ Youth can never be too cautious of ſinful compliances at their firſt ſetting out in life; a great deal depends on what *company* they keep, and what *pleaſures* they purſue.

(*a*) 1 Cor. v. 11. (*n*) Prov. iv. 14, 15, Chap. vii. 27, 28.

" *Tho' conſcience checks him, yet thoſe rubs got o'er,*
" *He ſins ſecurely and looks back no more.*
" *Ill habits gather by unſeen degrees,*
" *As brooks make rivers, rivers ſwell to ſeas.*" *

CLEANDER thus, that noble gen'rous youth,
Was firſt deluded to forſake the truth;
Then wild aſſociates robb'd his tender mind,
Of all impreſſions of a *virtuous* kind;
The ſabbath day with theſe he would profane,
While drunkenneſs and harlots prov'd his bane. (a)
His pious father view'd him with concern,
And often weeping begg'd him to return;
But vice too ſadly reign'd in every part, (n)
Which quickly broke a ſorrowing mother's heart;
Who thus in tears th' unhappy youth addreſt,
" Attend, *Cleander*, to my *laſt* requeſt;

" Before

* Remember, my young contemporaries, no one ever became abandoned all at once, but many have had great cauſe to rue their *firſt* deviations from the paths of virtue and ſobriety.

(a) *Sabbath-breaking*, *debauchery* and *wine*, have been confeſſed by numbers of unhappy young fellows, the firſt and principal reaſons of their coming to an untimely end.

(n) To deliberate with ſin, is like a moth flying about a candle, which it ſoldom, if ever, does long, without being burnt.

" Before too late forſake your evil ways,
" For they have ſhorten'd your poor mother's days:*
" O might I live to ſee my darling ſon
" Incline to virtue (but GOD's will be done)
" In ſongs of praiſe I'd ſpend my lateſt breath,
" And truſting in my SAVIOUR, *welcome* death.
" LORD! grant whene'er I leave this world of
" ſtrife,
" My death may prove my ſon's eternal life."
Then overcome with grief, ſhe turn'd aſide,
And juſt was heard to ſay *farewell*, and died.

'Twas now too late, the loſt *Cleander* found
His hopes in vain to heal the fatal wound,
Which ſin had made within his tainted breaſt,
By vice polluted and with crimes oppreſt;
The thoughtleſs youth too harden'd to amend,
And through imprudence left by ev'ry friend;
Soon met a juſt, but ignominious end.

* If parents would be more ſolicitous for the good morals of their children, and concern'd to eſtabliſh their tender minds in the love and practice of religion and virtue, by a pious *example* and *admonitions*, they might hope on good grounds to be well rewarded for their trouble, in beholding the happy effects of ſuch an education, in the ſober lives and conduct of their offspring, Prov. xxii. 6.

THUS ſatan triumphs when he brings the ſoul,
From *ſmaller* crimes (*a*), to ſin without controul;
The young and gay by tempting pleaſures won
To ſeek the company they ought to ſhun,
Are firſt deluded and are then undone.*

PROPITIOUS Heav'n, in mercy deign to ſmile,
On ev'ry youth of Britain's happy iſle;
O may their tender hearts to good incline,
Grow as the corn and flouriſh as the vine;
When hell attempts to make them go aſtray,
Omniſcient Father! guide their early way;
Direct their ſteps to virtue's bleſt abode,
And may Religion lead their ſouls to GOD.

Now let me ſoar on fancy's eagle wing,
And in more rural numbers ſtrive to ſing
Thy beauties, *Richmond*, and thy green retreats,
"At once the Monarch's and the muſes ſeats;"
Whoſe lofty hill commands on ev'ry ſide,
A view of Nature in her ſylvan pride. (*a*)
Here verdant fields and flowery meadows riſe,
There azure mountains ſeem to touch the ſkies;

Whilſt

---

a) Nemo repente fuit turpiſſimus. Heb. iii. 13.

* 'Tis much eaſier to ſhun vice before it is practiſed, than afterwards to relinquiſh it; this many have *fatally* experienced.

(*a*) Read the deſcription of Richmond Hill in Thompſon's Summer, line 1406.

Whilſt far beyond the Thames meand'ring flows,
Whoſe ſilver ſtream a Heav'n inverted ſhows;
And as it gently glides, on either hand,
Diſpenſes bleſſings thro' our favour'd land.

THUS for the poor, the ſtarving and diſtreſt,
May charity abound in every breaſt;*
And genuine godlineſs without controul,
Flow like this ſtream, and ſpread thro' ev'ry ſoul.

YE *fortune*'s fav'rites, who abound in wealth,
And ye *more* bleſt, enjoying conſtant health:
Let this your *chief* your *greateſt* pleaſure be,
Relieving thoſe who claim your ſympathy;
And ſhew your gratitude for mercies giv'n,
By charity to men and thanks to Heav'n (*a*)

WHAT beaut'ous landſcapes all around appear,
Dreſt in the liv'ry of the ſmiling year!
Where'er I turn my eager wand'ring eyes,
New ſcenes delight me and new proſpects riſe:
On yonder ſpot majeſtic *Windſor*'s ſeen,
Whoſe ſtately foreſt deckt in chearful green,

* 1 Cor. xiv. 1. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 8.

(*a*) Epheſ. v. 20. Col. iv. 17. 1 Cor. xiii.

Shall ever flouriſh in immortal lays,
While *Pope*'s harmonic numbers ſound its praiſe;
The ſiſter hills at diſtance I deſcry,*
There lofty *Harrow* lifts its ſpire on high: (*a*)
In every part freſh beauties riſe in view,
The varied proſpects ſtill are ever new;
Like the ſweet truths the ſacred Scriptures yield,
On contemplation's mount, by faith reveal'd
From which believers daily comfort gain,
A balm for ev'ry wound, a cure for ev'ry pain. (*n*)

SAY, happy Chriſtian, (for thou ſure muſt know)
What inward pleaſures from *Religion* flow?
Pleaſures as laſting as they're truly ſweet,
The ſprings of joy unfading and compleat;
Both worlds ſhe freely promiſes to give,
To thoſe who daily by her precepts live;
This world with all things really good and great,
And life eternal in a *future* ſtate. (*v*)

PLEAS'D

* Highgate and Hampſtead.

(*a*) Now to the ſiſter hills that ſkirt her plain,
To lofty *Harrow* now, and now to where
Majeſtic *Windſor* lifts his princely brow. *Thomſon.*

(*n*) 2 Peter i. 4. Romans viii. 17.

(*v*) 1 Tim. iv. 8. vi. 6.

PLEAS'D with the ſcenes which all around appear,
Fain would I hold a peaceful dwelling here,
While genial ſummer rules the changing year;
Far from the town, remote from noiſe and ſtrife,
Here let me live a quiet *country* life; (*v*)
Be this delightful hill my calm abode,
To ſtudy nature, (*a*) and converſe with GOD. (*n*)
Here, while the pleaſing landſcapes I ſurvey,
Which court my fancy and invite my ſtay;
Hills, valleys, meads, and yonder winding ſtream,
The rural ſubjects of my preſent theme,
O may my thoughts (as trees ſhoot upwards) riſe,
Above the region of theſe lower ſkies
And dwell on things celeſtial and divine,
Whilſt pure devotion runs-thro' every line.

(*v*) O far from cities my abode remove,
To realms of innocence, and peace and love.
. . . . . .
And if unblam'd my fond deſires might plead,
A little cottage on the lonely mead
Should be my choice. *Browne on the Univerſe.*

(*a*) . . . . . O quickly bear me hence,
To wholſome *ſolitude*, the nurſe of ſenſe;
Where contemplation prunes her ruffled wings,
And the freed ſoul looks down to pity kings. *Pope.*

(*n*) That rural ſolitude and the calm receſſes of the country, are aſſiſtant to devotion, may be learned from the primitive chriſtians having oratories or prayer houſes built in ſuch retreats.
Bennet's Chriſtian Orator.

PARENT of *Nature!* all creation's LORD!
Who form'd the Heavens by thy powerful word,
And made the earth for man's peculiar care,
The ſea for fiſhes, and for birds the air,
Who clothes the fields with graſs and ripening corn,
The reader's mind with inward grace adorn,
Thy ſacred image on his heart impreſs,
And clothe his ſoul in JESU's righteouſneſs.
As yonder hills appear to meet the ſky,
May his affections thus aſcend on high;
And rais'd by grace on wings of faith and love,
Tho' here below, appear to live above; (*a*)
While preſſing forward in his *chriſtian* courſe,
(Like yonder river haſt'ning to its ſource *)
Do thou, O GOD! his help and ſhield appear;
And as a plenteous harveſt crowns the year)
May ſure ſucceſs on all his dealings wait,
And bliſs his portion in a *future* ſtate.

BUT lo! the ſun is haſt'ning to the weſt,
In all the grandeur of a monarch dreſt;
Now is the time to walk the neighb'ring fields,
While every breeze refreſhing coolneſs yields

To

(*a*) Col. iii. 2. * The Thames.

To ſeek the plains or thro' the meadows ſtray,
While yon bright orb emits a fainter ray,
And length'ning ſhades proclaim declining day. (*t*)

THUS life, with all its joys, when death is near,
Will but a lengthen'd ſhade at *beſt* appear,*
To an eternity of bliſs or woe,
To which the unimbodied ſoul muſt go;
For after death *two* ſtates *alone* remain
Of endleſs *pleaſure*, or eternal *pain*. (*a*).

Then aſk thyſelf, nor think the queſtions ſtrange,
Am I prepar'd to meet the awful change?
Have I believ'd in CHRIST, the ſinner's friend?
Do I on Him or on *myſelf* depend?
Have I acknowledg'd GOD in all my ways? (*n*).
In ev'ry word and action liv'd his praiſe?
Is ſin my hatred, godlineſs my aim?
Am I in *life* a chriſtian as in name?

(*t*) . . . . . The approach of night,
The ſkies yet bluſhing with departing light,
When falling dews with ſpangles deck the glade,
And the low ſun had lengthen'd every ſhade. *Pope.*

Now the day wears, the ſun-beams faintly bound,
And taller ſhadows ſtretch along the ground. *Blackmore.*

* 1 Chro. xxix. 15. (*a*) Matt. xxv. 46. Dan. xii. 2. John v. 29.

(*n*) Prov. iii. 6.

Do I adorn the doctrines I believe?
Or by hypocriſy my ſoul deceive? (v)
How have my fleeting hours been daily ſpent?
In every ſtation have I learnt content?
What *ſolid* ground have I to hope, at laſt,
God will forgive my ſins and follies paſt?
Let every reader thus without delay,
With ſelf-examination cloſe each day.*

Is life a ſhadow? are our days a ſpan?
What then is frail and feeble creature man?
A worm.

(v) Matt. xvi. 26. Chap. xxvi. 51.

Seeming devotion does but gild a knave,
That's neither faithful, honeſt, juſt, nor brave;
But where religion does with virtue join,
It makes an hero like an angel ſhine. *Waller.*

* Nor let ſoft ſlumber cloſe thine eyes,
Before you've recollected thrice,
The train of actions thro' the day,
Where have my feet choſe out their way?
What have I learnt where'er I've been?
From all I've heard, from all I've ſeen?
What know I more that's worth the knowing?
What have I done that's worth the doing?
What have I ſought that I ſhould ſhun?
Or into what new follies run?
What duties have I left undone?
Theſe ſelf-enquiries are the road,
That lead to virtue and to GOD.

Watts's Improvement of the Mind.

A worm of earth, whoſe race will ſoon be o'er,
Alive to-day, to-morrow ſeen no more. (*a*)
That *time* is ſhort, the ſcriptures oft declare,
Then for *eternity* let all prepare;
Our length'ning years (like ev'ning ſhades) portend,
The day of our exiſtence near its end;
Improve the preſent moments ere they fly,
None are too old to mend, or young to die.*

THE air ſerene invites the chearful ſwain,
From daily toil to ſeek the verdant plain,
There join'd by neighb'ring youths, in harmleſs play
And rural games, to ſpend the falling day.
Now gloomy woods or pathleſs meadows prove,
The lonely haunts of ſolitary love; (*n*)

While

(*a*) Job. xiv. 1, 2, 12. * Eccleſ. xi. 9, 10. Chap. xii. 1.

(*n*) . . . . Now from the world,
Sacred to ſweet retirement lovers ſteal,
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
To glimmering ſhades and ſympathetic glooms,
Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling ſtream
Romantic hangs, there thro' the penſive duſk
Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation loſt,
Indulging all to love. *Thompſon.*

While evening draws her ſhadowy curtains round,
And in her ſober liv'ry, clothes the duſky ground. (*t*)

As now declines the ſplendid orb of day,
The *weſtern* clouds a beauteous ſcene diſplay,*
Some cloath'd in purple, others ting'd with gold,
Whoſe various ſhapes romantic views unfold;
Here edg'd with crimſon fleecy waves appear,
There bluſhing ruins deck the ruddy ſphere,
While hills on hills to mimic fancy riſe,
And *rural* landſcapes paint the glowing ſkies; (*a*)

'Till

(*t*) Now came ſtill evening on, and twilight grey,
Had in her ſab'e liv'ry all things clad. *Milton.*

Now lab'ring oxen, ſpent with toil and heat,
In their looſe traces from the fielld retreat;
While curling ſmokes from village tops are ſeen,
And the fleet ſhades glide o'er the duſky green. *Pope.*

* . . . . The ſhifting clouds
Aſſemb'ed gay, a richly gorgeous train
In all their pomp, attend his ſetting throne. *Thompſon.*

(*a*) His rays play upward, in the fleecy clouds,
That ſwiftly pencil'd dreſs a mimic ſcene
In fancy's eye, of groves and whiten'd Alps,
And towers romantic, rear'd complete or waſte
In ruin'd majeſty, with interſpace
Of golden Ether and Elyſian plain.
Browne's Sunday Thoughts.

The evening now with bluſhes warms the air,
The ſteer reſigns his yoke, the hind his care!
The clouds aloft with golden edges glow,
And falling dews refreth the flow'rs below, *Garth.*

'Till with the ſetting ſun's diverging rays,
The pleaſing proſpect into ſmoak decays.

Now to the woods the tuneful birds repair,
And lull'd to ſleep their warbling ſongs forbear;
Home from the meads return the weary ſwains,
While flocks and herds lie ſlumb'ring on the plains,
And thro' the fields a ſolemn ſilence reigns. (*n*)
Now chilling dews lament departing light,
And diſtant proſpects vaniſh from the ſight,
While ſober evening yields the world to *night*.

As ſilent darkneſs ſpreads her black'ning veil,
O'er meadows, hills, and every verdant dale;
The varied ſcene around me gradual fades,
And all creation's wrapt in deep'ning ſhades;*
So when ſharp pains the night of death declare,
The ſoul is often whelm'd in dark deſpair,
And as the ſhades conceal each pleaſing view,
Diſtreſſing doubts and fears his hopes ſubdue;
Alarm his conſcience, raiſe an inward ſtrife,
Increaſe his horrors and but end with life. (*a*)

THUS

(*n*) Now the ſtill night with peaceful poppies crown'd,
Wide ſpreads her ſhady pinions o'er the ground. *Garth.*

* *Night*, ſable goddeſs! from her ebon throne,
In rayleſs majeſty, now ſtretches forth
Her leaden ſceptre o'er a ſlumb'ring world. *Young.*

(*a*) See the death of Francis Spira.

THUS died poor *Altamont*, the young and brave,
Eſtrang'd to virtue, and to vice a ſlave,
Who early fell (thro' paſſion's conqu'ring wiles)
A hapleſs victim to an *harlot*'s ſmiles. (*n*)
In taſte a libertine, in temper gay,
Immers'd in pleaſures and to luſt a prey;
Deaf to advice, foe to himſelf alone,*
In actions headſtrong, and to folly prone.
Thoughtleſs of GOD and of a future ſtate,
Thus unprepar'd he met his wretched fate;
His *handſome* perſon was his greateſt ſnare,
This made him court, and courted by the Fair; (*a*)
Fond of intrigue, he was at heart a rake,
Wont to deceive, then ruin, then forſake;
A fatal wound one evening prov'd his end,
The cauſe of vice endeav'ring to defend;

Three

(*n*) Prov. v. 5th to the 11th verſe.

* Tho' the example of vicious men may be (and too often is) fatal to thoſe around them, yet they muſt be reckoned by the Chriſtian (while perſiſting in the ways of ſin) fighting principally againſt *themſelves*, and in the end will be found the greateſt enemies of their own ſouls. The vices of ſome men, hurt none but thoſe who practiſe them.

(*a*) Beauty is a far greater ſnare in both ſexes than is generally imagined, and never appears *truly* amiable to the diſcerning part of mankind, but when it is accompanied with *virtue*, *prudence* and *humility*.

Three hours he linger'd in the greateſt pain,
While every art was try'd, but try'd in vain.

O SAY, what words his fear of death could tell,
When fill'd with dread he cry'd, "*I'm doom'd to hell*;
"To live with devils in eternal woe,*
"Without one gleam of hope, for *God*'s my foe.(*a*)
"I'm loſt forever; whither ſhall I fly?
"I want a Saviour, but no friend is nigh;"
Then breath'd his laſt, unfit to live or die.
From ſuch examples let the living know,
"*Virtue* alone is happineſs below;
Vice its own puniſhment will ever prove;
Religion only leads to realms above.

SILENT as nature overſpread with ſhades,
While not a ſound the liſt'ning ear invades;(*n*)

Still

---

* However the young and gay may ſpend their hours in the eager purſuit of faſhionable amuſements and unlawful pleaſures, regardleſs of an hereafter; let ſickneſs, pain, or the terrors of death overtake them, and they will be taught their folly, and wiſh to be forgiven (it may be) too late.

(*a*) *I will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh.* Prov. i. 26, 27, 28.

(*n*) Silence, how dead! and darkneſs how profound!
Nor eye nor liſt'ning ear an object finds;
Creation ſleeps.
. . . . . .
Ev'n ſilent night proclaims my ſoul immortal,
Ev'n ſilent night proclaims eternal day. *Young.*

Still as creation in the depth of night,
(When ghaſtly dreams the guilty ſoul affright)
So true believers calmly finiſh life,
Unknown, to trouble, free from inward ſtrife;
Thus well aſſur'd whatever is, is *beſt*, (*v*)
They die in peace and enter into reſt. (*x*)
So may'ſt thou tread death's gloomy cypreſs vale,
By *faith* ſupported all its terrors hail;*
And ripe for heav'n, leave every comfort here,
Without a ſigh, a murmur, or a tear.

THUS happy *Theron* late reſign'd his breath,
Firſt gave his ſoul to GOD, then welcom'd death;
Long did he walk in true Religion's ways,
His works were charity, his words were praiſe;
His actions virt'ous, godlineſs his aim,
His only glory was in JESU's name;
Of temper chearful, of a generous mind,
Friend to the wretched, to the needy kind;
Juſt in his dealings, upright and ſincere,
To vice a ſtranger, and from folly clear;
The Scriptures were his true unerring guide;
Thus as a real chriſtian liv'd and dy'd;

And

(*v*) Rom. viii. 28. (*x*) Iſ. xxvi. 3.

* Heb. xi.

His hand the good man faſtens on the ſkies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl, *Young.*

And now I doubt not, dwells with ſaints above,
In bliſsful realms of everlaſting love. (*a*)

Hence, reader, lay theſe words to heart,
Not he who acts the *greateſt* part,
But he who acts the *beſt*, will be
The happieſt man eternally. (*n*)

(*a*) Matt. xxv. 46 John v. 29.

(*n*) Acts x. 34, 35. Deut. x. 17. 1 Pet. i. 17.

End of the THIRD BOOK.

THE

RURAL CHRISTIAN;

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK IV.

Night is fair *Virtue*'s immemorial friend;
The conſcious moon thro' every diſtant age,
Has held a lamp to wiſdom. *Night Thoughts.*

THE ARGUMENT.

MOONLIGHT described; Ghosts, the time of their appearance, their existence chiefly ideal; permitted only upon some extraordinary occasions; an address to Contemplation; the nightingale, night's lone musician; *the moon an emblem of faith; life a dream; the value of blessings known by their loss; the great Creator of heaven and earth the believer's guide and defence; a comfortable thought under affliction; the necessity of early repentance urg'd from the consideration of the uncertainty of life, and certainty of death; night ending in day; afflictions the way to glory, a strong argument for resignation and contentment under divine dispensations; the clock striking; its address to man; night useful as day; troubles necessary as health; conclusion.*

THE RURAL CHRISTIAN:

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK IV.

Nox regnat . . . . . .
Somnus reficit languida membra.

BEHOLD! to ſooth the rugged brow of night,
The moon ariſing yields a ſilver light,
And twinkling ſtars unnumber'd deck the ſphere,
While rural ſcenes in ſhadowy robes appear.*
Now is the time when reſtleſs ghoſts are ſaid
To haunt the tombs or ſtalk along the glade,

Or

Full orb'd, the moon, and with more pleaſing light,
Shadowy ſets off the face of things. *Milton.*

* . . . . . Now reigns
Gentle night! whoſe modeſt maiden beams
Give us a new creation, and preſent
The world's great picture ſoften'd to the ſight;
Nay kinder far, far more indulgent ſtill,
Thou too, whoſe mild dominion's ſilver key
Unlocks our hemiſphere and ſets to view
Worlds beyond numbers, worlds conceal'd by day,
Behind the proud and envious ſtar of noon.
Young's Night Thoughts.

Or ſeek the ruins of ſome mould'ring tow'r,
Where owls ſcream hideous thro' the midnight hour;
But treat ſuch notions with a juſt diſdain,
As mere deluſions of a ſickly brain.*

Tho' 'tis confeſs'd that ſuch appear'd of old,
Some great momentous ſecret to unfold,
By heav'n's command; on gracious errands ſent,
To clear the guiltleſs, or ſome guilt prevent:
We're not to judge (as many do from hence,
They viſit earth on every light pretence;
Oft at the chambers of the reſtleſs wait,
As the appointed meſſengers of fate;
Or in the ghaſtly veſtments of the dead,
Haunt the lone manſion, (*t*) or thro' meadows tread,
And nightly terrify the weary ſwain,
(As home returning o'er the dewy plain)
In various ſhapes as village ſtories tell,
Such ſpectres only in the fancy dwell; (*a*)

Ideal

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* As it is the chief concern of wiſe men, to retrench the evils of life by the reaſonings of *religious* philoſophy, ſo it is the employment of fools to increaſe them by the ſentiments of idle ſuperſtition. Spectator, No. 7.

(*t*) . . . . . The lonely tower
Is alſo ſhunn'd, whoſe mournful chambers hold,
So night-ſtruck fancy dreams, the yelling ghoſt.
Thompſon's Summer.

(*a*) Now the timorous imagination teems with phantoms, and creates numberleſs terrors to itſelf. *Harvey on Night.*

Ideal ghoſts, which but exiſt in thought,
And haunt thoſe heads alone, with idle whimſies fraught.*

While ſome weak minds with apparitions teem,
And in their ſleep of horrid phantoms dream,
Come, ſacred *Contemplation!* aid my theme,
Help me to meditate JEHOVAH's praiſe,
Whoſe wond'rous works demand my higheſt lays.

BUT hark! what ſounds my raviſh'd ears delight,
And charm the ſilence of the peaceful night, (*a*)
From yonder grove? (at noon my cool retreat,
From rain a ſhelter, and a ſhade from heat.)
'Tis the ſweet nightingale's melodious ſtrains,
Night's *lone muſician*; warbler of the plains; (*n*)
Whoſe pleaſing notes the ſhades of evening chear,
While genial Summer rules the changing year. (*v*)

So

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* How happy is that man who can truly ſay, Je crain DIEU et je nepoint d'autre crainte; I fear GOD and none beſides.

(*a*) All things are huſh'd, as Nature's ſelf lay dead,
The mountains ſeem to nod their drowſy head;
The little birds in dreams their ſongs repeat,
And ſleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dew ſweat. *Dryden.*

(*n*) The warbling bird . . . . .
Tunes ſweetly her love-labour'd ſong.

(*v*) She all night long her am'rous diſcant ſings,
Trills her thick warbled notes the ſummer long.

So when the Chriſtian's overwhelm'd with grief,
Hope chears his ſorrows, yields a kind relief;
Softens his pains, and comfort will impart,
While love to CHRIST poſſeſſes all his heart.

IN ſolemn pomp the moon with borrow'd ray,
Rides thro' the Heav'n's, and ſheds a ſofter day;
While fix'd and planetary orbs around,
With living ſpangles deck the blue profound;
Majeſtic ſcene! where worlds on worlds appear,
And ſtarry diamonds animate the ſphere;*
(To pilgrims oft a pleaſing welcome ſight,)
And kindly diſſipate the gloom of night. (*a*)
So when the pious Chriſtian, near his end,
For ſtrength and ſuccour does on CHRIST depend;

True

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* Lo! all above the pure cœrulean height,
Is ſpangled o'er with pendant orbs of light;
That ſeem like ſparks to ſtud th' etherial blue,
A train innum'rous to the wondering view. *Browne.*

The ſpacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal ſky,
And ſpangled heav'ns, a ſhining frame,
Their great original proclaim. *Addiſon.*

(*a*) As when the moon, reſulgent lamp of night,
O'er Heav'n's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
The conſcious ſwains rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light. *Pope's Homer.*

True faith lights up the dreary vale of tears,
His ſoul enlivens and becalms his fears,* 55
Removes his doubts, and teaches him to ſing,
Where's grave, thy victory? and O death, thy
ſting?
While full of hopes he hears the welcome call,
And thro' his SAVIOUR triumphs over all. (*a*)

THE *natural* man, by ſin in darkneſs bound, 60
Does not receive the goſpel's joyful ſound;

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* Epheſ. ii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. John xi. 25, 26.

As the moon receives her light from the ſun, and will be of no ſervice to us after death; ſo faith receives ſtrength and vigour from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and at death will be turned into viſion.

'Tis faith diſarms deſtruction. *Young.*

See Hervey on the Tombs.

(*a*) 1 Cor. xv. 55, 6, 7.

The dying Chriſtian's farewell.

Farewell *my deareſt friends, I muſt away,--*
Death calls me hence, I would no longer ſtay;
Farewell *my tranſient comforts here below*
CHRIST bids me welcome, to His Heav'n I go;
Farewell *my ſorrows, and adieu my grief,*
To every trouble death's a kind relief;
Farewell *my fading joys, I go to prove*
The endleſs pleaſures of the ſaints above;
Farewell *my pains, be gone my riſing fears,*
In Heav'n there's neither ſorrow grief nor tears;
All earthly happineſs I now reſign,
Vain world farewell, but welcome joys divine.

To me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain. Phil. i. 21.

With heart-felt pleaſure and with true delight,
'Till (as the moon ariſing chears the night)
Faith gives of JESUS an enlivening ſight;
Then every promiſe in the Scriptures ſown,
He (by appropriation) makes his own,
And thro' the *Spirit*'s teachings mounts on high,
Truſts in the LORD, and learns to live and die.*

'THIS life's a *dream* with all its tranſient joys,(t)
Like airy bubbles blown by wanton boys,
Whoſe various colours pleaſe their gazing eyes,
But burſt and vaniſh ere they're taught to riſe;
Thus all our fleeting comforts here below,
Which earth can give or Heaven itſelf beſtow,
Are but of ſhort duration, quickly fade,
By ſickneſs blaſted, or by grief decay'd;
By ſorrows wither'd, or by death deſtroy'd,
They're gone for ever, ere they're well enjoy'd;

Hence

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* John vi. 63. Rom. viii. 1, 5, 13, 14.

(t) James iv. 14. Job vii. 1, 6, 16. Chap. viii. 9.
Pſ. xc. 5, 6, 10. Pſ. cii. 11. ciii. 15.

Life is a *dream*, and all things ſhow it,
I *thought* ſo once, but now I *know* it. *Gay.*

The term *jeſt* I cannot but think highly improper here, and therefore would recommend, with the pious Dr. *Watts*, in his 17th Pſalm, the ſentiment, *Life is a dream*, &c. as we are one day to die in *earneſt*, life ſhould not be accounted a *jeſt*, becauſe on time depends eternity.

Hence learn to fix your thoughts on things above,
Make not *this* world the object of your love, *80
But dwell on joys eternal and divine, (*a*)
And may thoſe endleſs joys be ever thine.

THE greateſt bleſſings giv'n us while on earth,
We're by their *loſs* too often taught their *worth*;
Thus in affliction, *health* is chiefly priz'd, 85
The dead eſteem'd, who *living* were deſpis'd;
And time, *moſt precious* time, recall'd in vain, (*n*)
While godlineſs (too late) is counted gain.

DELUDED mortal, flee the baits of ſenſe,
Purſue not pleaſure at your ſoul's expence; 90

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* 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17. (*a*) Col. iii. 2, 3.

Looſe then from earth the graſp of fond deſire,
Weigh anchor, and ſome happier clime explore. *Young.*

(*n*) . . . . . Moments ſeize,
Heav'n's on their wing; a moment we may wiſh,
When worlds want wealth to buy; bid day ſtand ſtill,
Bid him drive back his car, recal, retake
Fate's haſty prey: implore him, reimport
The period paſt, regive the given hour.
Night Thoughts.

Lorenzo! O for yeſterday to come. *Night* II.

Think on the ſhortneſs of the preſent ſtate,
Prepare in time to meet approaching fate,
For, Oh! the dang'rous folly, to be wiſe too late.*

HEAR, for thy comfort, poor believing Soul,
O'er whom the waves of whelming ſorrows roll;
The mighty GOD who made this ample ſky,
With all theſe num'rous pendant worlds on high,
Is thy protector, and eternal friend;
On whom thou mayeſt in every grief depend;
Who has declar'd thou ſhalt receive no ill,
Without His knowledge, or againſt His will,
And when afflictions ſhall his ſaints befall,
Has promis'd graciouſly to hear their call. (a)
O then, thrice happy ſoul! aſſuage thy grief,
He will at all times be thy ſure relief;
Thy GOD's thy glory who preſerves thy ways,
Strive thou to *live* as well as *ſpeak* his praiſe.
Still for thy further conſolation know,
The LORD for wiſeſt ends appoints thee woe;

To

* The *thought* of death alone the *fear* deſtroys;
A diſaffection to that precious thought
Is more than midnight darkneſs on the ſoul,
Which ſleeps beneath it, on a precipice,
Puff'd off by the firſt blaſt, and loſt *forever*.

Dr. Young.

(a) 1 Cor. x. 13. Matt. x. 30. Pſ. xxxiv. 19.

To wean thee from the world, thy patience prove,*
To ſhew thy ſonſhip and a father's love. (*a*)

WILL life, with all our frail enjoyments here,
But as a ſhadow or a dream appear?
Is day far ſpent, and is the night at hand,
Which neither youth nor riches can withſtand? 115
(That awful night of *death* which ſets us free,
When mortal puts on immortality. (*n*)
That *dernier* ſleep which ends our joys below,
From which we wake to happineſs or woe
That knows no end?) Then ſtrive without delay,
To gain *eternal* life; work while 'tis *day*; (*v*) 120
Now is the accepted time, receive the grace,
In Scripture offered to a guilty race; (*x*)
Do what thou haſt to do with all thy might, 125
Leſt this thy day ſhould cloſe in *endleſs* night (*z*)

* 1 Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7. and 8th verſes, together with the 11th, Rev. iii. 19. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Peter i. 4, 7, 8, 9. Job v. 17, 19. (*a*) Prov. iii. 11, 12.

Good when he gives, ſupremely good,
Nor leſs when he denies;
E'en croſſes from his ſov'reign hand,
Are *bleſſings* in diſguiſe *Hervey.*

(*n*) 1 Cor. xv. 63. Job xxx. 23. (*v*) John ix. 4.

(*x*) 2 Cor. vi. 2. Iſa. xlix. 8. (*z*) Eccleſ. ix. 10.

Seek true repentance and religion prize,
In youth, in manhood, and in age be wiſe.*

Does one dread night of ſure unerring fate,
The young, the old, the rich, the poor await? (*a*)
(When we muſt ſleep, a ſleep ne'er ſlept before,
While fancy ſhall diſtreſs and pleaſe no more, (*t*)
But all our viſionary dreams be o'er?)
Then hear, ye Youths, unthinking, vain and gay,
"Who drink the ſpirit of the golden day;"
Ye pleaſure's vot'ries, and ye ſlaves of ſenſe,
By ſin no longer dare Omnipotence;
Think how uncertain's life, and death how ſure,
Take heed of *little* ſins, (*n*) that fatal lure,
And know they're *neareſt* danger, who are *moſt* ſecure. (*v*)

SURE as day ends in night, night ends in day,
While morn ariſing drives the ſhades away;

Let

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* Rom. xvi. 19. Eph. v. 15, 16. Col, iv. 5. Prov. iii. 13 to the 17th verſe.

(*a*) Numb. xvi. 29.

(*t*) This alludes to *pleaſing* or *frightful* dreams.

(*n*) No ſin can be *little*, as every one is committed againſt the *Great GOD* of heaven and earth; but alas! how few believe this!

(*v*) Moſt ſecure in their *own* opinions; for the danger of temptations overcoming the ſoul, ariſes from an inward (tho' falſe) perſuaſion of our *own* ability to withſtand them.

Let not the chriſtian under grief deſpair,
But every pain with reſignation bear;
For thro' afflictions true believers riſe,
To realms of endleſs day beyond the ſkies.*
Thus as the darkneſs ends, it *leads* to light,
The fineſt day ſucceeds the *blackeſt* night;
Then, poor benighted ſoul, complain no more,
But what thou canſt not underſtand, *adore*. (*a*)
Is pain thy lot? preſume not to repine,
To GOD thy ſoul and all concerns reſign,
For thou art His, and he is ever thine. (*n*)

A few more ſorrowing days, weeks, months or years,
A few more painful ſtruggles, groans and tears,
And all thy conflicts, Chriſtian, will be o'er,
And ſin and grief diſtreſs thy ſoul no more.

WHILST here below, (expos'd to every ſnare
Which hell contrives to make the ſoul deſpair,

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. Acts xiv. 22. Comfort and conſolation can never be too often ſuggeſted to a troubled and deſponding ſoul.

Iſa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. Chap. xl. 1.

(*a*) The ways of Providence are dark and intricate,
Our underſtanding ſearches them in vain. *Addiſon.*

(*n*) John xv. 16. 1 Cor. i. 27. Chap. iii. 22, 23.
Jer. xxxi. 33. Chap. xxx. 22. Pſ. lxxiii. 25.

Surrounded daily by unnumber'd foes,
And ever ſubject to the ſharpeſt woes)
The true believer has his lone abode,
He often mourns his diſtance from his GOD;
To live is CHRIST, he owns, but this were vain,
If death was not his *everlaſting* gain;
Oh how he longs to hear that kind decree,
To get from earth, and all its troubles free,*
And dwell thro' endleſs ages, LORD! with Thee.

BUT hark! methinks I hear the bell ſtrike one,
The ſound proclaims another day's begun; (*a*)
Time ſwiftly flies, improve the moments lent,
Prepare for death, and huſband each event;
Think not to trifle with the LORD moſt high,
Who views thine actions with a *jealous* eye; (*n*)
Take heed of ſleeping on enchanted ground,
Dream not of happineſs where ills abound;
But know, tho' man to fancy *here*'s a ſlave,
'Tis all reality beyond the grave (*v*).

ARE

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* Phil. i. 23. Pſ. xlii. 1, 2.

(*a*) The bell ſtrikes one; we take no note of time
But as it flies; to give it then a tongue
Is wiſe in man. *Young.*

(*n*) Exodus xx. 5. Deut. xxxii. 21.

(*v*) Eccleſ. xi. 3. Habbak. ii. 3.

All, all on earth is *ſhadow*, all beyond
Is *ſubſtance*; the reverſe is folly's creed:
How ſolid all, where change ſhall be no more. *Young.*

ARE light and darkneſs neceſſary here,
(Does night as uſeful as the day appear)
So are affliction's, ſickneſs, pain, and woe,
As health and pleaſure, while we dwell below; (*t*)
Then ceaſe to murmur, poor deſponding ſoul,
O'er whom afflictions on afflictions roll;
Truſt in the LORD, make him alone your ſtay,
He'll give thee ſtrength according to thy day; (*n*)
Thy ſure ſupport and beſt phyſician prove,
Firſt *ſanctify* afflictions, then remove;
And land thee ſafe at laſt in realms above. (*v*)

HENCE learn what bleſſings on the chriſtian wait,
Both in the preſent and a *future* ſtate (*x*);
The LORD's his GOD, his guardian, guide, and friend,
Mercy and goodneſs on his ſteps attend;
Eternal love his ſun and ſhield appears, (*z*)
In every danger to diſpel his fears; *

(*t*) The graces of the chriſtian, ſuch as *patience, faith, humility &c.* could never be exerciſed without trials and afflictions of one kind or another; therefore David ſays, *It was good for me that I was afflicted.* Pſ. cxix. 67, 71.

(*n*) Deut. xxxiii. 25. (*v*) John xvii. 24. Chap. xiv. 2, 3.
(*x*) Prov. xi. 31. Chap. xii. 21. 28.

(*z*) Pſalm lxxxiv. 11. *For the LORD GOD is a ſun and ſhield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

* GOD is our ſun, he makes our day,
GOD is our ſhield, he guards our way;

From

His beacon * prove thro' life's tempeſtuous ſea,
And bliſsful portion in eternity. (a)

Do pleaſures from *Religion* flow,
Which only *real chriſtians* know?
Then let us all with one accord,
Seek, honor, love, and fear the LORD.

From all th' aſſaults of hell and ſin,
From foes without and foes within.
All needful grace will God beſtow,
And crown that grace with glory too;
He gives us all things and withholds
No *real* good from upright ſouls.
O GOD our King, whoſe ſovereign ſway
The glorious hoſts of heaven obey;
While from thy preſence devils flee,
Bleſt is the man that truſts in Thee. *Watts.*

* A beacon is a light, placed on an eminence to direct the mariner, give warning of an approaching enemy, and prevent ſhipwrecks.

(a) Iſ. lx. 19. 20. ☞ Rom. viii. 28.

THE

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN's
SOLILOQUY
ON THE
BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

Te rerum deus alme canam, dominumque, patremque
Magne parens. *Buchan.*

WHILE day's great regent riſes with the morn,
And rides majeſtic thro' the *eaſtern* ſky;
Let me by grateful adoration led,
Riſe with the lark to hail returning day;
And by the good old Patriarch * taught, repair
To verdant fields, or flow'r enamel'd plains,
The ſtill retreats of ſacred *Contemplation.*
There undiſturb'd may I with pleaſure trace
(While pure devotion all my ſoul inſpires)
The charms of nature, and in them behold
The work and wiſdom of *creation's* GOD.

IT muſt be ſo, my ſoul, there is a GOD, !
Who all things made and is in all things ſeen;

* Iſaac.

Each blade of graſs o'er which I lonely tread,
Proclaims in reaſon's ear a *power ſupreme*;
Who into vegetable life at firſt,
Spoke by his word, each tree, each herb and flow'r,
That grow ſpontaneous in theſe ſylvan ſcenes.*
Or how, or whence, by whoſe life-giving aid,
Could in the womb of time, ye atheiſts ſay,
The leaſt of Nature's fine wrought beauties ſpring?
Could *fate* produce, or *chance* create them? no;
The thought is impious, groſs abſurdity,

Too

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* Pſalm civ. 14.

Beauty complete, and majeſty divine,
In all thy works, *ador'd Creator*, ſhine:
Where'er I caſt my wand'ring eyes around,
The GOD I ſeek in every path is found;
Purſuing Thee, the flow'ry fields I paſs,
And read Thy name on every ſpire of graſs;
I follow Thee thro' many a lonely ſhade,
And find thee in the ſolitary glade;
I hail Thee in the kind refreſhing gale,
That ſwiftly whiſtles thro' the dewy vale;
The pink the jes'mine, and the bluſhing roſe,
Perfum'd by Thee, their fragrant leaves diſcloſe;
The feather'd choir, that welcomes in the ſpring,
By thee were taught their various notes to ſing;
By thee, the morning in her crimſon veſt,
And ornaments of golden clouds is dreſt;
The ſun in all his ſplendor wears Thy beams,
And drinks in light from thine exhauſtleſs ſtreams;

The

Too glaring in itſelf to find a place
Within the boſoms of the *ſerious Few.*

SAY, what is *chance* or *fate?* mere empty names;
Gods of *man*'s making if they're gods at all:
Blaſphemous doctrine! fit alone to be
By hell ſuggeſted and by devils taught:
That *chance* or *fate*, ſuch blind ideal things,
The atheiſt's ſubterfuge and fictious god,
Should be by man, poſſeſſing *reaſon*'s light,
Put in the place of DEITY divine.

WHERE is the man with greateſt wiſdom bleſt,
Who by his art or knowledge, toil or care,
Could make the ſeed ſown in the ground, to die,
Then

The moon reveals Thee by her glimm'ring ray,
Unnumber'd ſtars Thy glorious paths diſplay.
Amid the ſolemn darkneſs of the night,
The thoughts of GOD my muſing ſoul delight;
Thick ſhades and night Thy dread pavillion form,
In ſtate Thou rid'ſt upon the flying ſtorm,
While Thy ſtrong hand its fierceſt rage reſtrains,
And holds the wild unmanag'd winds in reins;
What ſparklings then Thy majeſty declare,
When thro' the vaſt expanſe thy lightnings glare;
When peals of thunder rend the ſkies around,
I hear Thy voice in the tremendous ſound;
But oh! how ſmall a part is known of Thee,
From all Thy works' immenſe variety!
Whatever mortal men *perfection* name,
Thou in an infinite degree doſt claim. Mrs. *Rowe.*

Then riſe again and under ſummer ſuns,
To ſwell and ripen into full-ear'd corn?

COULD ought throughout creation make itſelf?
Or ſay, my ſoul, was not creation's ſelf
In the beginning, out of *nothing* brought*
By Him who was, and is, and is to come,
The infinite, unmade and ſelf-exiſtent GOD?(*a*)

AND is there then a GOD who all things made,
Who into being call'd the heav'ns and earth,
And is alike both ſeen and rules at will,
Throughout the vegetive and moral world?
Oh! may His grace be ſeen, and rule in me.

LET me in all I do from day to day,
Devoutly ſtrive t' approve myſelf to Him,
Whoſe all pervading eye and gracious hand
Obſerves, upholds, and guides my wand'ring ſteps;
Whoſe bounty daily ſupercedes my wants,
Whoſe watchful providence and guardian care
Preſerves, prolongs, and keeps my life from harm;
O may I *live* as well as *ſpeak* his praiſe. §

SHOULD

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* Gen. i. 2. (*a*) Col. i. 16, 17. John i. 3.

§ Mr. Addiſon happily expreſſes the ſentiments of a grateful Chriſtian in the following beautiful lines:

When all thy mercies, O my God!
My riſing ſoul ſurveys,
Tranſported with the view, I'm loſt,
In wonder, love and praiſe.

Oh,

SHOULD I be ſilent on ſo juſt a theme,
Or ere unmindful of His goodneſs prove;
(In whom I live, from whom all bleſſings come)
The very herds that browze on yonder plains,
And ſheep thick nibbling in the clover'd vale,
Would with the chearful tenants of the bough,
All join t'upbraid my vile ingratitude;
While daily fed from his all-bount'ous hand,
(Who in due ſeaſon gives to all their meat)
They *warble*, *bleat*, and *low* his matchleſs praiſe.

THUS *Thompſon* ſung, meek nature's darling child,
By heav'n inſtructed and by grace inſpir'd;
While true devotion waited on his lays.*
Thus pious *Hervey* taught, and with ſucceſs,
In happy periods ſpread abroad His fame,
While ſaints attended and approv'd the ſtrains. (*a*)

" BLEAT out afreſh, ye hills, ye moſſy rocks
" Retain the ſound; the broad reſponſive low,
" Ye vallies, raiſe; for the *great Shepherd* reigns.
. . . . . .
" Ye woodlands, all awake, a boundleſs ſong
" Burſt from the groves. . . . . .

" Ye

Oh, how ſhall words with equal warmth,
The gratitude declare,
Which glows within my raviſht breaſt,
But thou can'ſt read it there.

* Thompſon's Hymn. (*a*) Hervey's Deſcant on Creation.

" Ye chief, for whom the whole creation ſmiles,
" At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
" Crown the great hymn. 80
" For *me*, when I forget the darling theme,
" Whether the bloſſom blows, the Summer ray
" Ruſſets the plain, inſpiring Autumn gleams,
" Or Winter riſes in the black'ning Eaſt;
" Be my tongue mute, My fancy paint no more, 85
" And dead to joy, forget my heart to beat.

Thompſon's Hymn.

" BIRDS of the air, waft on your wings and
" warble in your notes, His praiſe. Ye rougher
" world of brutes, join with the gentle ſongſters
" of the ſhade, and howl to Him your hoarſe ap-
" plauſe. Bleat out, ye hills; let broader lows
" be reſponſive from the vales. Ye foreſts catch
" and ye rock retain the inarticulate hymn.

Hervey's Meditations.

BE this my chief employ, my only fame,
To ſing His praiſes and His works proclaim,
Who gave to univerſal nature birth,
And with his goodneſs crowns the teeming earth;
Whoſe boundleſs *mercy* lengthens out my days,
Whoſe *wiſdom* guides, whoſe *grace* protects my ways.
To nature's GOD be never-ceaſing praiſe.

Hallelujah.

A SOLEMN ADDRESS TO THE EVER-PRESENT GOD.

DEO. OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all things both in heav'n and earth!
Who gave at firſt to every ſyſtem birth;
By whoſe prolific word, the worlds were made,
Who ever reigns on high, with light array'd,
To thee be endleſs adoration paid.

"O THOU great Arbiter of life and death!"
Clouds are thy chariot and the wind thy breath;
In every thunder-clap thy voice we hear,
In every lightning's flaſh behold thy ſpear;
The ſun derives its vital heat from Thee
And bears reſemblance to thy majeſty;*

The

* Whatever grace or harmony's expreſt,
On all thy works the GOD is there conſeſt;
Order and majeſty adorn the whole,
Beauty, and life, and Thou th' inſpiring ſoul. *Mrs. Rowe*

The moon and ſtars, by thy benign command,
Soften the ſhades when night o'erſpreads the land;*
The earth's thy footſtool and the heav'n's thy throne,
All creatures thee their great Creator own;
From thee alone, exiſtence man receives,
By thee created, and on thee he lives;
To thee alone our higheſt praiſe we owe,
For all our bleſſings from thy bounty flow;
The herds and flocks to Thee their voices raiſe, (*a*)
They *low* Thy goodneſs and they *bleat* Thy praiſe;
Trees, *herbs* and *flow'rs* Thy works aloud proclaim,
And *birds* melodious, warble forth Thy name;
Snow, *hail* and *rain*, obey Thine awful nod,
While all creation echoes, THOU ART GOD. (*n*)

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* Pſ. cxiii. 3, 19, 20. (*a*) Pſ. ciii. 27.

(*n*) To Thee, whoſe temple is all ſpace,
Whoſe altar, earth, and ſkies;
One chorus let all beings raiſe
All nature's incenſe riſe. *Pope.*

SYLVAN LETTERS;

OR, THE

PLEASURES

OF A

COUNTRY LIFE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

REASONS

IN DEFENCE OF

AND RETIREMENT:

IN PROSE AND VERSE.

The Third EDITION, enlarged.

Felix qui propriis ævum tranſegit in arvis.

Ye woods and wilds receive me to your ſhade,
Theſe ſtill retreats my contemplation aid;
Ye groves and flow'ry vales in you we find,
The firſt unblemiſh'd joys for man deſign'd:
Nature does here her virgin ſmiles afford,
And ſhews us Paradiſe again reſtor'd;
Our ſouls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care and conſcious guilt retire, *Mrs. Rowe.*

Advertiſement.

AS the author of the following letters is apprehenſive ſome perſons may be ready to blame him for publiſhing them, as the late Rev. Mr. *James Hervey* was, for printing his excellent and devout meditations, it being ſaid that his tenets were diſhonourable to GOD and injurious to ſociety, by making men melancholy and regardleſs of buſineſs. The author begs leave to obſerve, the enſuing epiſtles are *principally* deſigned for, and addreſt to thoſe, who having paſt thro' the more active and buſy ſcenes of life, are out of choice and inclination, deſirous of retiring from the noiſe, buſtle and cares of the town, to enjoy the inſtructive pleaſures of rural ſolitude,* in converſing with themſelves, and maintaining a more intimate communion with their GOD; by which means they may be enabled, not only with *greater* compoſure of mind and fixation of thought to reduce the knowledge of their duty, which they had attained by theory, into *practice*, but ſtudy without diſturbance and intruding cares, that uſeful and important leſſon, how to live in *this* world, ſo as have good grounds to hope of being eternally happy in a *better* after death. See letter 27.

To

* Thoſe letters in the following collection, written on *ſolitude* and *retirement*, are chiefly intended to ſhew how a retired life may be beſt improved to the real benefit of our own ſouls, and the advantage of our fellow creatures.

TO THE

READER.

RURAL ſolitude is always choſen and prefer'd by the contemplative man, before all the deluding ſcenes of pleaſure and feſtivity; however the gay, unthinking, and polite, are charmed with the futile amuſements of the town, the mimickry of the theatres, or ſplendors of a ball, thoſe who delight in the calmneſs of reflection and ſerenity of thought, ſeek the peaceful abodes of the country, and are beſt pleaſed with the tranquillity of a ſylvan retreat, according to the opinion of a celebrated author,* which I beg leave to inſert in his own words, in defence of my above aſſertions.

"THE love of retirement has in all ages ad-
" hered very cloſely to thoſe minds, which have
" been moſt enlarged by knowledge, or elevated
" by genius.

"THOSE who have enjoyed every thing that
" is generally ſuppoſed to confer happineſs, have
" been forced to ſeek it in the ſhades of privacy;
though

* Dr. Johnſon.

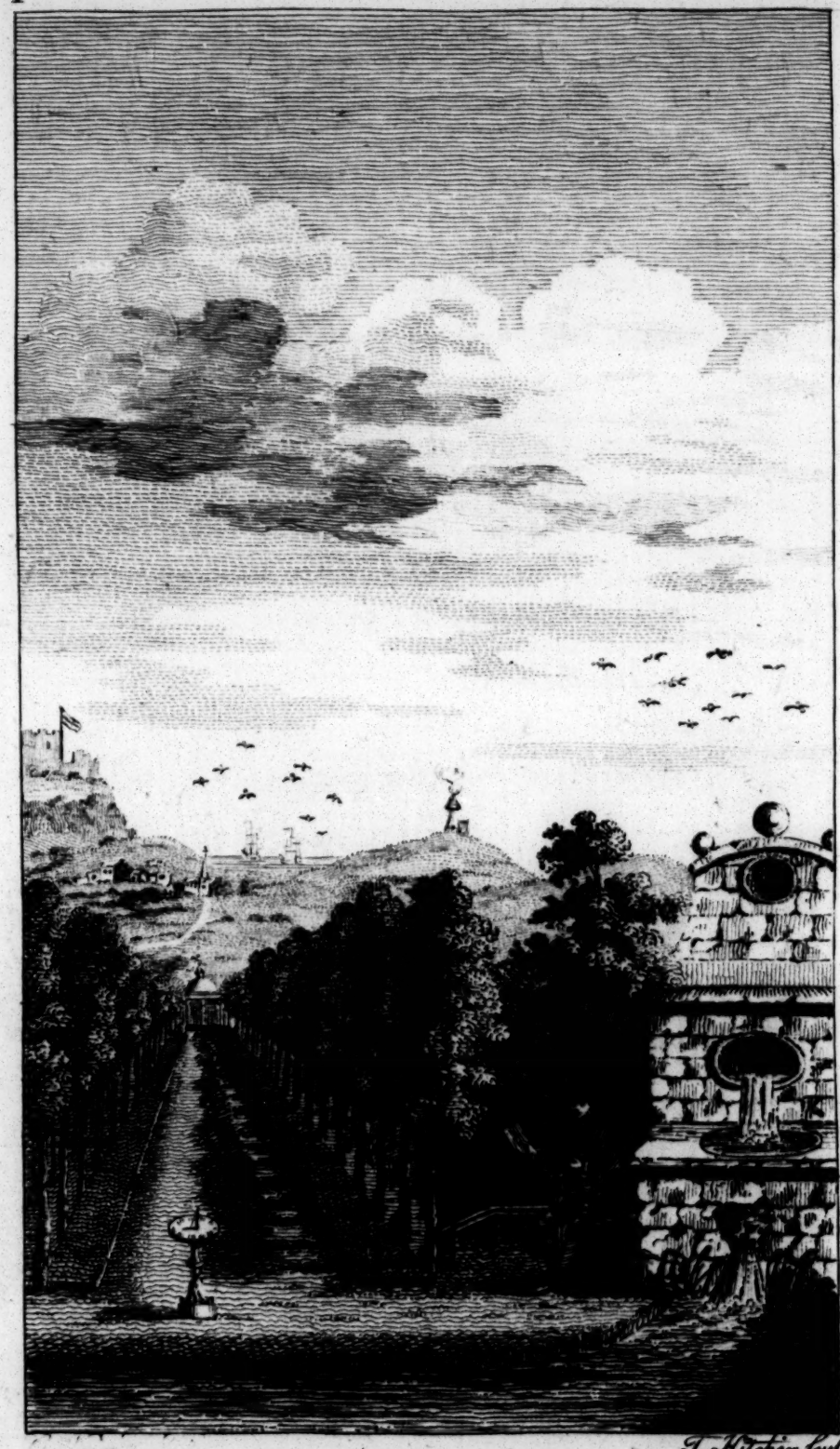
"though they have poſſeſſed both power and "riches in abundance, and been therefore ſur- "rounded by men, who conſidered it as their "chief intereſt, to remove from them every thing "that might offend their eaſe, ruffle their tran- "quillity, or interrupt their pleaſures; they have "ſoon felt the languors of ſatiety, and found "themſelves unable to purſue the race of life, "except with frequent reſpirations of intermedi- "ate ſolitude."*

THE following letters exemplify the benefits of retirement and the happineſs of a *country* life, while they at the ſame time contain matter for *ſerious* enquiry, as well as ſentiments of the higheſt moment and importance. May they be read with candour and received with attention; their foibles overlooked with the condeſcenſion of good nature, and the various anecdotes and leſſons of morality they hold out, prove both inſtructive and entertaining to every Reader.

G. W.

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* Rambler, No. 7.



T. Kitchin sculp

Retire, and read thy Bible to be gay. Young





T. Kitchin sculp

Welcome ye Shades, Ye bowery thickets hail.

Thompson

SYLVAN LETTERS,

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF A COUNTRY LIFE.*

LETTER I.

From a young lady in the country to a relation in town, describing the situation of her retreat, and her rural employments.

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

AFTER a (three days) very agreeable journey, I am arrived at Dr. S—'s villa; and according to promiſe, take the firſt opportunity of informing you how I got down, and my opinion of the ſituation. With reſpect to what I met with on the road, it would not afford variety enough to be entertaining; only this I muſt ſay, the pleaſant towns we paſt through, with the extenſive proſpects on every ſide, and fine weather, all contributed to make travelling delightful,

* Thoſe letters in the enſuing collection, treating of country pleaſures and the benefits of retirement, are with all due ſubmiſſion, recommended more particularly to the peruſal of gentlemen retiring from buſineſs, and ladies fond of rural ſolitude.

ful, by taking off from the fatigue which naturally attends riſing early, riding all day, and going to bed late at night.

THE houſe is elegant beyond deſcription, about four miles from the high road, near a ſmall village, and ſurrounded with woods, groves, and fertile vallies; juſt ſuch a retreat as I have long wiſh'd for, as a welcome aſylum from the noiſe and hurry of a gay and faſhionable life. Here no balls or aſſemblies, plays or maſquerades divert my attention, or invite me to kill time; but the warbling ſongſters of the groves daily preſent me with the native harmony of an *aerial* concert, and praiſe the Author of univerſal nature in melodious ſongs.*

I DOUBT not but you envy my ſituation, eſpecially as I know you love retirement; and give me leave to ſay, in the ſincerity of diſintereſted friendſhip, without the leaſt flattery, nothing, my dear Sophy, but your agreeable company and converſation could add to my preſent happineſs

* However too many ſeek for company in the circles of diſſipation and ſenſuality, the lovers of retirement and contemplation can truly ſay, with *Scipio*, Nunquam minus ſolus quam cum ſolus: *never leſs alone than when alone.*

pineſs; the loſs of which I hope you will in ſome meaſure make up by your entertaining letters; the longer they are, the more acceptable, the oftner, the more welcome; and be aſſured in return, ſome of my pleaſanteſt moments will be anſwering your's.

THE whole family I am with, lay themſelves out to pleaſe me; Miſs B——, the doctor's niece, a ſenſible good-natur'd young lady, about twenty-two, (who Mrs S——, who is in a bad ſtate of health, has taken as her companion) ſeems particularly fond of me; we ſleep together by choice; often walk out together, and, in ſhort, are like two ſiſters; where you ſee one, you are almoſt ſure to find the other; ſhe is fond of ſolitude, has been educated in a religious manner, and early taught to pay a ſuitable reſpect and reverence to the doctrines of the goſpel. The family is kept in great order, and called together every morning and evening, to join in the ſacred acts of devotion; the doctor himſelf is the chaplain, and appears every way ſuited for the ſolemn work.

After breakfaſt, Miſs B and I retire into our chamber to dreſs ourſelves for the day, then ſit down to work, and by turns read to each other;

about Twelve o'clock we commonly take a walk in the garden, (a ſweet place indeed) but this I will give you a deſcription of in my next; after dinner, the doctor goes to his ſtudy and ſmoaks his pipe, or reſigns himſelf to ſleep, while Miſs and I take a turn or two down a fine ſerpentine gravel walk, ſhaded with lofty elm trees by the ſide of the garden, or ſit awhile in a beautiful arbor at the bottom of it, then return into the parlour, which looks over the road, and preſents me with a charming proſpect of the diſtant country; here Miſs B has her harpſichord, which ſhe plays on delightfully, and knowing I am fond of *ſacred* muſic, often favours me with a ſong out of Handel's Meſſiah, or a favourite anthem; this employs us till tea; afterwards, if not too cool, we take another walk, either into the garden, or a grove adjoining to it, and liſten to the evening ſongs of the nightingale, whoſe pleaſing notes are far more grateful to me than the fineſt airs of an Italian opera: as night advances, we are forced to leave the pretty creature, lulling itſelf to ſleep with her own agreeable ſounds. But I beg pardon for detaining you ſo long: believe me to be,

Dear Sophia,

AYLSHAM, *July* 4.

Your's unalterably.

LET-

LETTER II.

To the ſame. *Deſcribing a repoſitory or burial place, built in a grove near the garden, with a deſcription of the latter.*

DEAR SOPHIA,

YOUR kind letter found me at tea yeſterday afternoon with the doctor, his daughter, and Mrs. L——, a maiden lady about forty, a relation of theirs, (upon a viſit to them) who I forgot to mention in the hurry of my firſt epiſtle; ſhe is a very chearful woman, but fond of a domeſtic life, and very politely ſhares the care of the family with Miſs B. Her good ſenſe, affability, are diſcretion, and every day more viſible, in her prudent conduct and entertaining converſation.

After tea was over, Miſs B. told me if it was agreeable, ſhe would ſhew me what they called the *Repoſitory*; I readily conſented, and ſhe took me down the walk I deſcribed in my laſt, into the adjoining grove, whoſe numerous trees, planted in rows, form ſeveral pretty walks, while the pleaſing gloom adds a *verdant* ſolemnity to the whole: near the end, ſurrounded with lofty ſpreading elms, is the repoſitory, or (if I may ſo

call it) retired *Mauſoleum*, for it appears to be an imitation of one of the ſepulchres of the antients, or Ægyptian burying places, it being built for the reception of the dead.

We enter by an old-faſhioned door, which ſeems as if it had been made two or three hundred years ago; oppoſite to the entrance, and about two yards from the door, a long curtain draws back and diſcovers ſeveral niches for coffins in an horizontal poſition one over another, three of which are filled up with the gentleman who built the houſe, his wife, and daughter; on each ſide are lamps, which are to be ſuppoſed perpetually burning: at the top of the building, which is ſquare, are two grates made of wire, to let in the freſh air: the ground is left unpav'd, in caſe any one ſhould die of the ſmall-pox, or ſome other contagious diſtemper, to receive ſuch bodies to prevent them infecting the place; death's heads, hour-glaſſes, and ſeveral ſuch like emblems are painted on the walls; over the door appear in large characters, thoſe remarkable words of the apoſtle Paul, *Death is ſwallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to* GOD *who giveth us the victory, through our Lord* JESUS CHRIST. In one corner is written, "Mors ſola fatetur quantula

tula ſint hominum corpuſcula;" * near this, under the repreſentation of a ſcull, with a crown on it, is ſeen that momentous, but juſt obſervation of Horace, " Mors æquo pulſat pede pauperum tabernas, regumque turres." (*a*)

THE ſilence and drearineſs of the whole, ſtrike a religious awe upon the mind, and drive away all the gay images of an enſnaring world; whilſt the inanimate contents in their narrow cells, point to that paſſage in the Pſalms, LORD, *teach me the meaſure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.*

AFTER ſtaying here ſome time, viewing the building, and converſing together on the momentous ſubjects it inculcates, we returned up the grove into the garden. The entrance to this is through an iron gate of curious workmanſhip; a broad gravel walk ſpreads itſelf through the middle; at the extremity of which, is a pretty neat arbour, ſurrounded with jeſſamines and honey-ſuckles, whoſe mellifluous odours are far more refreſhing and reviving to me, than the ſo

* Death alone proves what little things men are.

(*a*) Death knocks at or viſits without diſtinction the beggar's cottage and the monarch's palace.

much admir'd perfumes of muſk, civet, or bergamot. Here Miſs B. and I often repair to converſe on the beauties of creation or the happineſs of a country life; here, when ſhe is unavoidably engaged in family affairs, I retire alone to enjoy the pleaſures of reading and meditation, or ſpend ſome of my happieſt moments in writing to my dear Sophia; an employment I always begin with delight, and leave with the greateſt reluctance.

By the ſide of the arbour, another walk is made, which leads to a beautiful ſummer-houſe, built on an eminence, near a delightful and extenſive meadow, where lambs, white as the driven ſnow, and harmleſs as the cooing dove, bleat reſponſive through the pleaſing verdure. But I muſt break off here, leſt I entirely exhauſt your patience, (with compliments where due) I remain, dear Sophia,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To the ſame. *With a deſcription of noon aad a converſation that paſt between Miſs B. and her, on the receipt and peruſal of her laſt epiſtle.*

DEAR SOPHIA,

YOUR laſt, the footman brought me as I was ſitting under the ſhadow of a ſpreading oak tree, angling in a beautiful canal near the bottom of the garden. Miſs B. was reading to me, out of Thompſon's excellent poem on the ſummer, where deſcribing a happy pair, he ſays,

. . . . . Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer ſelf;
Supremely happy in th' awaken'd power
Of giving joy. Alone amid the ſhades,
Still in harmonious intercourſe they liv'd
The rural day, and talk'd the flowing heart,
Or ſigh'd and look'd unutterable things.

The ſun was ſhining in its meridian ſplendour, the herds and flocks in the neighbouring meadows, were reclin'd under the verdant ſcreen of trees and hedges, to ſhun the noon-day heat, and ſleep away

the ſultry hours, fann'd by the gentle breezes that blew acroſs the fields reviving coolneſs; the buſy bees were extracting delicious ſweets from every flower; the induſtrious ants, with indefatigable labour, were dragging their ſeveral burdens (of proviſions for the community, or materials for repairing their habitations, injur'd by the heedleſs wandering traveller, or unavoidable accidents to which they are daily expoſed) to their diſtant homes.

WELCOME was the refreſhing ſhade and chearing zephyrs, but far more welcome to me was my dear Sophia's kind and agreeable letter, which contained ſuch a pleaſing deſcription of the happineſs of early devoting ourſelves to GOD, and the benefits of a religious life, contraſted with the miſeries of the ungodly in a *future* ſtate, which not only witneſs the piety of the writer, but the feelings of a generous, grateful and elevated mind, impreſt with the reality of the truths related, and earneſtly deſirous of the eternal welfare of your friend; after reading it over with great ſatisfaction, I gave it to Miſs B. aſſured there was nothing in it but what agreed entirely with *her* notions of religion, and experience of divine truths which ſhe has often told me

of

of in her diſcourſes with me on the ſublime enjoyments of the real believer in both worlds.

When ſhe had finiſhed it, and obſerved the propriety and juſtice of your ſentiments, we began converſing together on the ſubjects you had diſcuſt in ſuch a judicious and lively manner. Indeed, ſays Miſs B. early piety recommended by a religious example and education, and attended with the divine bleſſing is productive of unſpeakable comfort, ſatisfaction, and joy; a joy which the apoſtle Paul ſtiles full of glory, and our juſtly admired poet (Pope) beautifully deſcribes in the following lines:

Which nothing earthly gives, nor can deſtroy,
The ſoul's calm ſunſhine, and the heart-felt joy.

What inexpreſſible pleaſure muſt it give a fond indulgent parent, to ſee his child endeavouring to follow his ſteps in the paths of virtue and religion; on the other hand, how thankful ſhould the children of ſuch parents be, not only for their ſolicitous concern for their temporal and eternal intereſts, but for the continuance of ſuch valuable lives, while many are taken off in the prime of life, and forced to leave their young

unhappy offspring to a world of temptations, calamities and diſtreſs.

As ſhe ſpoke the laſt, I obſerved a pitying tear trickle down her tender cheek, at the thoughts of the numerous difficulties to which the helpleſs orphans are frequently expoſed; for her humanity is as great as her will is good to help and relieve the wretched and unfortunate. I was juſt going to make a reply to what ſhe had ſaid, when the ſervant brought us word that dinner was ready; upon which we left our agreeable ſituation, and returned up the garden, into the houſe, where we found the doctor and Mrs. L—— interrogating the footman, whether he had found us, and where; having loſt us ever ſince twelve o'clock. Forgive, dear friend, the length of this, and believe me to be, with the greateſt ſincerity,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

From a miniſter in the country to a lady in town, giving an account of the death of her daughter, with the melancholy circumſtances that attended it.

MADAM,

THE contents of this epiſtle, I doubt not, will greatly ſurprize you, but not more ſo than the accident which occaſions it, did me and my whole family; your daughter, whom you was ſo obliging to entruſt under my wife's care, is now, I hope, in glory. You are ſtartled and wonder what I mean; you may well be ſurprized indeed, but not to keep you longer in ſuſpence, I muſt acquaint you, though with the greateſt reluctance and concern, ſhe died this morning; you know ſhe was in a decline when ſhe left London, which is not only one of the moſt flattering but fatal diſorders which the body is ſubject to, for perſons often think themſelves well one hour and are dying the next, ſo it was with Miſs M. we thought at breakfaſt ſhe ſeemed pretty chearful, and eat as much as ſhe had done of a morning ſince ſhe came down.

About eleven o'clock, as ſhe and my eldeſt daughter were walking together in the garden, ſhe complained of a violent pain in her ſtomach, and before any aſſiſtance could be had, fainted away, and died in a few minutes after; the ſhock which it gave my daughter, has thrown her into violent fits, and what will be the iſſue of them God only knows. With reſpect to my wife and myſelf, we ſincerely participate with you, in the grief and concern you muſt experience, for the loſs of ſo valuable and dutiful a child; the whole houſe is in the utmoſt confuſion; what with the ſurprize at ſo ſudden a death and the fears of the dreadful conſequences reſpecting my poor girl, I can hardly tell what I write; I hope you will pardon the abruptneſs and inaccuracies you *muſt* diſcover in this epiſtle, being written with a trembling hand, an aching heart, and weeping eyes.

I need not tell you what I feel while I am inditing theſe few lines, nor how much pain I know they muſt give you, in the reading of them; ſuffice it to ſay, as a parent, my fears and anxiety of mind for the recovery of my daughter, is no leſs diſtreſſing than the ſorrow and concern you feel for the loſs of your's: it would

would be quite ſuperfluous to add, how neceſſary your preſence will be at our houſe as ſoon as poſſible.

I am, Madam,

Dorſetſhire, with all due reſpect,

May 21. Your's to command.

LETTER V.

From the miniſter's daughter after her recovery, to a young lady in town, with ſome more particulars concerning the character and behaviour of the late Miſs M. concluding with a few remarks on the neceſſity of being always in readineſs for the approaching change.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM juſt recovered from a dangerous fever, occaſioned by the ſudden death of Miſs M. (the pretty, ſenſible, and good-natured young lady, I told you of, in my laſt) I was not expected to live for a week, my father and mother were in the greateſt trouble imaginable, not only for me, but the melancholy accident that brought on my illneſs; through mercy I have now got the better of it, and take this firſt opportunity (though I am very weak ſtill) of writing to my

dear

dear Berinda, to acquaint her with the particulars of the mournful ſtory which I know you are deſirous to be informed of.

Miss M. had been with us three weeks, and ſhowing a particular eſteem for me, I promiſed myſelf great pleaſure in her company and converſation; ſhe was fond of walking, and would often aſk me to accompany her, which I readily complied with, being willing to oblige her as far as lay in my power: indeed ſhe was ſo good-tempered, affable, and complaiſant, that every one in the family did all they could to make her ſituation agreeable, and I may truly ſay, we are all ſincere mourners for her. How pleaſing it is to be ſo much beloved by others! what a ſtrong motive this is to ſet us on endeavouring to make ourſelves as deſervedly eſteemed.

She was very open and free in diſcourſing with me, and made me the confident of her inmoſt ſecrets; on the morning which ſhe died, as we were walking together in the garden, ſhe addreſt me in words to the following effect: "My "dear Miſs F——, the many civilities and re- "ſpect I have received from you and your worthy "family, call for my moſt grateful acknowledg- "ments; I wiſh it was in my power to make a ſuitable

" a ſuitable return, but that it is not, nor ever
" will be, for I find the diſorder, on which ac-
" count I came into the country, increaſing on
" me daily; however, at times I appear much
" better, it is only the nature of the complaint ſo
" to do; I know it will ſoon put an end to a life
" which would be but a burthen if prolonged;
" yet I cannot leave the world, without telling
" the real cauſe of this fatal complaint, I have
" laboured under for theſe three months paſt.*

" About two years ago, a young fellow who
" viſited a near relation of mine, happening to
" ſee me there one evening, fell in love with me,
" as he was pleaſed to ſay, which in the end
" proved only a pretence to deceive and abandon
" me; he was a very likely young man, and well
" inſtructed in the cruel and diabolical arts of
" flattery and deluſion. By his eaſy and polite
" addreſs, he gained too great an aſcendency
" over my affections, and ſoon afterwards I
" found he had all my heart; his genteel beha-
" viour and deportment deceived my dear and
" tender

* This was a real fact, and plainly ſhows how very cautious young women ſhould be in fixing their affections too haſtily, or believing every man who flatters them only to deceive, ruin, and then laugh at them and boaſt of it.

" tender mother into an eſteem for him; and the
" particular notice he took of *me*, together with
" his aſſiduous endeavours to ingratiate himſelf
" into my favour, made me think much better
" of him than I have ſince found (to my un-
" ſpeakable ſorrow and confuſion) he deſerved.

" It is very hard to know who are ſincere,
" I'm ſure I have ſufficient reaſon to ſay ſo; for
" he continued his addreſſes with the greateſt ap-
" pearance of *real* love, till the day was appoint-
" ed for our marriage; when hearing accidental-
" ly of a young lady with a greater fortune than
" mine, he ſoon found her out, and in about
" four months after married her; which news
" being brought to me, fell on my ſpirits and
" threw me into this decline, which I hope, I
" have thus far bore with a becoming fortitude
" and reſignation, and now find too much to
" ſuffer many days longer.

" I FORGIVE him who is the cauſe of my
" grief, from the bottom of my heart, but I
" blame myſelf for my too eaſy credulity and
" belief; that men are baſe, deſigning, and in-
" conſtant, I am certain of, then why did I
" liſten to and believe the falſe and cruel So-
phron? I ſtand ſelf-condemned; yet who
" among

" among women, can ſteel their hearts againſt
" the ſoft and pleaſing ſenſations of a tender, ge-
" nerous paſſion; encouraged by the addreſſes of
" a man, who ſeems by nature formed to felici-
" tate the fair? But I have done; may you, my
" dear, never experience the anguiſh of a *ſlighted*
" love; I have paid *dear* for it, very dear
" indeed."

HERE ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, and taking hold of my hand, preſt it with all the ardour of a genuine friendſhip, and with many ſighs and much difficulty, begged me to conceal the real cauſe of her illneſs, till after her deceaſe, as ſhe never had divulged it to any one but me. We had not walked above five minutes after ſhe mentioned this laſt requeſt, when ſhe complained of a violent pain in her breaſt, ſo very great as to ſtop her breath; and before I could make any one hear me (for we were near the bottom of our garden) ſhe fainted away in my arms, and after fetching one or two deep ſighs expired, leaving me in a ſituation inexpreſſibly affecting, and near deſperation.

MY mother and ſiſter thinking we had been walking longer than uſual, came to ſeek for us, and happening to turn down the walk we were in,

in, found me as I have deſcribed, and getting aſſiſtance, had us both conveyed into the houſe, for I went into fits as ſoon as they came up to me. I have been particular in the account, and far exceeded the bounds of a letter I own; but as it was your deſire to hear the whole of the circumſtances, I hope you will forgive me. I ſhall only add, how abſolutely neceſſary it is to be always ready to meet the laſt enemy, (ſeeing life is ſo precarious) ſhe, poor girl, I truſt, was ſo, though I believe ſhe did not think her end ſo near as it proved.

In a few days, hours, or minutes more, and we may be numbered among the dead; who can tell which of us ſhall be the *next?* then let us ſtrive earneſtly to be intereſted in Him, who hath declared, *Whoſoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall not die eternally.**

Dorſetſhire,
July 10.

I remain,

Your's ſincerely.

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* John xi. 25, 26. Rom. x. 11.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

From Miſs F——, the miniſter's daughter, to the ſame young lady, with an epitaph on Miſs M. made by a gentleman who well knew her living, and now ſincerely mourns her loſs; concluding with reflections on the vanity of all earthly enjoyments without health.

DEAR BERINDA,

I FORGOT to tell you in my laſt, that Mr. Maynard ſeeing Miſs M. at our houſe the third day after ſhe came down, was greatly charmed both with her perſon and converſation; for ſhe had a very fair ſkin, a modeſt innocent countenance, and a great deal of good ſenſe, accompanied with a ſweetneſs of temper, that could not fail of being pleaſing and agreeable to every one ſhe converſed with.

He was very inquiſitive to know who ſhe was, and after being told by my father what an amiable character ſhe bore, and having reaſon to believe the truth of it from what little he had ſeen of her, ſeemed very deſirous of being introduced to her as an humble ſervant; but this my father would by no means allow of without he firſt went and gained her mother's conſent; accordingly being

being told where Mrs. M. lived in town, he ſet off the Monday following, with full purpoſe to aſk her permiſſion to pay his addreſſes to her daughter.

UNFORTUNATELY for him, he was thrown from his horſe, before he had got four miles from his houſe, and received a dangerous contuſion in his head, upon which he was obliged to be conveyed with the utmoſt care imaginable to the next cottage, where a ſurgeon from our town being ſent for, who knew him very well, dreſt his wound and ordered him not to be moved till he ſhould call again. In ſhort, he continued extremely bad till the day before Miſs M. died, when finding himſelf on the mending hand, (though very ſlowly) and being juſt able to ſit up for the firſt time ſince the accident, he began to be in hopes of once more purſuing his intended journey; but oh! how great was his ſurprize and concern, when the day following he heard that Miſs M. was dead; words are too faint to deſcribe his grief and concern on receiving the melancholy news. After being told how ſudden it happened, and the converſation that paſt between her and me, he fetched a deep ſigh, and ſaid, while the tears flowed down his pallid cheeks in great abundance, "The dear creature was *too* good to live in this world;

world; ſhe's gone to Heaven, I doubt not, where I hope ſoon to follow her." Here he made a long pauſe, being very weak and low, and was often obſerved to lift up his eyes, as if in ſome ejaculatory prayer. After gaining a little more ſtrength, he begged his ſiſter (who was with him moſt of the time of his illneſs, and gave me this account of it) to get pen, ink and paper, and write down the following character of her, which he ſaid he was certain ſhe deſerved.

Her *religion* was of the heart,
Her *devotion* warm, yet reaſonable,
Free from ſuperſtition and oſtentation;
She was ſteadily *virtuous*, not formal nor cenſorious;
Strictly *prudent*, yet eaſy and affable;
She was *benevolent* without weakneſs;
Chearful without levity
Ingenious without affectation,
And *beautiful* without vanity;
Formed for all the tenderneſs of friendſhip;
Moſt obliging and moſt ſincere,
But cautious in her choice;
She adorned the dignity of virtue,
By the grace of humility and good nature;
She liv'd above the world without pretending to *deſpiſe* it;

Suſtain'd the afflictions of life, with the patience
of a primitive chriſtian,
And died with that tranquillity and reſignation
Which becomes one, whoſe hopes are full of
IMMORTALITY.

AFTER this was done, he ſeemed inclinable to ſleep, being much fatigued, and continued very ill for a month afterwards, and was thought by the phyſician in great danger, but is ſince ſo much recovered as to walk about his houſe, though not able to go out yet, and it is to be feared never will, without ſomebody with him, appearing to be going into a deep melancholy, as his ſpirits at times are exceedingly depreſt.

WHAT avails, now, his having the greateſt abundance of the good things of this life, his elegant houſe, furniture and ſervants, his beautiful garden, ſummer-houſes, fiſh-ponds, and arbours? for he cannot enjoy them: he is really much to be pitied, and a ſtriking inſtance of the vanity and nothingneſs of all ſublunary pleaſures and emoluments, without health and ability to partake of them. Oh! my dear Berinda, we cannot be thankful enough for this beſt of earthly bleſſings,

bleſſings, *health*; which, like moſt of our enjoyments, none know the true value of, till they have felt it's loſs: I remain,

My dear friend's real well wiſher, &c.

LETTER VII.

To the ſame. *Giving an account of Mrs. M's. arrival at the miniſter's houſe, and her behaviour on ſeeing her daughter, with a deſcription of Miſs M's funeral, and the improvement that ſhould be made of ſuch alarming Providences.*

DEAR BERINDA,

YOUR reflections on the unhappy and affecting ſituation of Mr. Maynard, are very juſt, and entirely conſonant to thoſe ſentiments of piety towards GOD, and charity to men (which intends univerſal benevolence or philanthropy) which our pious and honoured parents have ſo early and earneſtly endeavoured to inculcate in our tender minds; may they always direct our thoughts, influence our deſires, and be the rule of our actions.

You beg to know how Mrs. M. the deceaſed young lady's mother, behaved on ſeeing her: truly moving indeed; ſhe got to our houſe the third day after her daughter's death, and as ſoon as ſhe ſaw my mother (without being able to ſay a word for ſome time, overcome with grief) ſhe burſt into a flood of tears; my mother could hardly refrain, and my ſiſter, who was in the room, actually did weep with her. After ſhe had given vent to the firſt emotions of ſorrow, ſhe deſired to ſee her dear child; accordingly my mother and ſiſter accompanied her to the room where the corps lay.

As ſoon as the door was opened, ſhe went up to the coffin, and looking into it, cried out with great vehemence, "Ah! that's my deareſt child, indeed! my once dutiful and much lov'd daughter, lovely even in death, who was the only ſupport and comfort of my liſe:" here ſhe again gave way to exceſſive grief, and was juſt going to faint, when my mother took a bottle of drops out of her pocket, and applying it to her noſe, and ſprinkling her face with ſome cold water, brought her to herſelf again; when looking at my mother, ſhe ſaid with great difficulty, "Oh! madam, you know not the pain and anguiſh of a fond mother, on the death of an only child, whoſe dutiful and affectionate behaviour endeared her to all her acquaint-

acquaintance, but eſpecially to her loving and indulgent parent."

SHE would have proceeded, but the overflowings of heart-felt ſorrow ſtopt her utterance; my mother ſeeing it affected her ſo deeply, prevailed with her, after many intreaties, to leave the room, but not before ſhe had taken another farewell look of the dear deceaſed.

THE Tueſday following Miſs M. was buried according to her own deſire, in the ſame vault with her uncle who lies in our church, about ſeven o'clock in the evening. As (you know) we are not far from the church, it was a walking funeral. The corps was carried firſt, as uſual, the mutes and feathers going before it; the pall was ſupported by ſix young ladies in white; three came from London on purpoſe, and the others were Miſs L. Miſs W. and my ſiſter; each of them were handed along by a young gentleman in white, all acquaintances of the deceaſed; then followed the afflicted Mrs. M. with her brother, who lives in our town; after them, my father and mother; then four couple more, relations and friends of Mrs. M. whom you know nothing of, accompanied with many promiſcuous perſons

of both ſexes, young and old, whom the ſight had drawn together, but hardly a dry eye among them.

THE Sunday following, by Mrs. M's deſire, my father preached a ſermon from theſe words, 1 Cor. xv. 49. *And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.* In the courſe of the ſermon, when he gave the character of the deceaſed, many were obſerved to ſhed tears; but nothing could equal poor Mrs. M's concern; every one pitied her; eſpecially thoſe who knew her valuable daughter when living, for *they* only could have an adequate idea how great her loſs was.

YOU ſee, my dear, from the particular account I have given of every circumſtance relating to Miſs M. and her mother, how ready and deſirous I am of entertaining you when it lays in my power. The ſtory, however mournful and affecting, was your requeſt; as ſuch I willingly complied in ſending it. The beſt uſe we can make of it, is, to be dutiful and obedient to *our* parents, that they may have as much reaſon to love us, as Miſs M. was beloved by her mother and all her acquaintance; and to ſet our affections on things above, and not on things on the

the earth,* knowing that all things here are changeable and inconſtant, fading and paſſing away; but all above is abiding and ſecure, and will remain unalterably the ſame through a long eternity.

I remain,

Dear Berinda,

Your's till death.

LETTER VIII.

From a gentleman lately retired into the country, to his friend in town, with reaſons in defence of a rural life, and reflections on happineſs and contentment.

DEAR SIR,

IN your laſt (which I received on returning from a very pleaſant walk, my amiable Sobrina and I had been taking, in one of the fineſt evenings the ſummer has afforded) you rally me on my *ſylvan* expedition, as you are pleaſed to term it, and ſeem to intimate a diſlike of my leaving town; but by way of excuſe, mention this as a reaſon, as it

* *Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the LORD, ſhe ſhall be praiſed.* Prov. xxxi. 30.

deprives you of my company and converſation; (very polite I muſt own, however.)

In vindication of myſelf, and to ſatisfy your enquiry, what could induce me to take up ſuch a reſolution, as that of retiring into the country; I will give you my reaſons for ſo doing, and thoſe particularly which had *moſt* weight with me; though it may be, in *your* view, they appear trifling, or no *ſubſtantial* reaſons at all.

The firſt was for my *health*, but more eſpecially that of my dear partner's, as ſhe was often troubled with violent pains in her head, accompanied with little or no reſt at night. To which you may reply, could you not as well have taken a houſe for the ſummer near town, where you might have gone in the evening and come back in the morning, or taken ſhort excurſions for a fortnight or three weeks at a time, about the country, without *entirely* abandoning your London friends? I anſwer, we both of us thought it better to ſettle at a diſtance from town, as the farther we went, the more pure and healthy we accounted the air would be; and that the hurry and fatigue of continually going backwards and forwards (in a great meaſure) would ſpoil the pleaſure we ſhould otherways take in the country.

The

THE ſecond was, as the calmneſs and ſerenity of a rural ſituation beſt ſuits with, and is moſt likely to encreaſe that tranquillity of mind, compoſure of thought, and love of reflection, which is ſo natural to be deſired by every contemplative man, and all thoſe who are fond of admiring and ſtudying the various beauties of nature, as you know I am much delighted with.

IN the next place, I was certain that nothing more contributed to promote *ſerious* meditation, nor afforded greater opportunities of ſearching into the truths of religion, the wiſdom of GOD, and the concerns of the ſoul, without diſturbance or annoy, than the peaceful ſhades of a country retreat;* and indeed, what can render us more acceptable to the Supreme Being, than ſpending our lives in his fear and ſervice?

I DON'T intend, by retiring into the abodes of rural felicity, to lead an idle, vain, and ſlothful life of indolence and inactivity, if ſo, you might well have cenſured me for the deſign I had in

* Some retire from the world, not merely to baſk in eaſe or gratify curioſity, but that being diſengaged from the common cares of life, they may employ more time in the duties of *religion*, that they may regulate their actions with ſtricter vigilance, and purify their thoughts by more frequent Meditation. *Adventurer*. No. 126.

view; but this was not the caſe, I knew there were various duties and employments indiſpenſibly neceſſary for me to attend to, both for my own and my fellow creatures benefit and advantage, while enjoying the calm and ſerene pleaſures of retirement; which I will inform you of, in my next, with an account of the manner I ſpend my time, and hope fully to convince you, that not one ſingle minute hangs heavy on my hands, as you ſeem to think it muſt: at preſent I only beg leave to add, as the purſuit of happineſs and deſire of contentment is implanted in every one more or leſs; they will, and do naturally excite all men to uſe thoſe ſeveral means and endeavours for the obtaining of them, which appear moſt likely for that purpoſe.

One thinks happineſs is procured by *riches*, therefore makes the getting of them his whole concern; another ſuppoſes (vain imagination!) it conſiſts in high ſounding *titles* and the grandeur of a *court*, therefore makes the purſuit of honours and emoluments the buſineſs of his life; a third places his felicity in *gaiety* and *amuſements*, or in gaming and licentiouſneſs, and on that account is loſt in vanity or overwhelmed in diſſipation, and (dreadful thought) it may be neither of them perceive their fatal miſtake, till it is too late; how

thankful

thankful then ſhould they be, whom an indulgent providence directs to the beſt methods of attaining happineſs, and gives both a will and opportunity to practiſe them.

For my part I muſt own, the ſureſt way to be happy in one's ſelf, and contented in every ſtation, appears to me, leaving all to the wiſe diſpoſal of the Creator of Heaven and earth,* and looking on whatever happens to us here below, whether proſperous or adverſe, as ordered for the *beſt* by Infinite Wiſdom and unerring Goodneſs; and this I hope I have done thus far, and ſhall continue to do (as enabled) till death, firmly perſuaded of Mr. Pope's aſſertion, that

. . . . Whatever is, is *right*. †

* We to ourſelves may all our wiſhes grant,
For nothing coveting, we nothing want. *Dryden.*

† This reſpects more particularly what GOD ſees fit in infinite wiſdom to appoint or permit to happen in the moral world, not what men by their wicked courſes are left to bring on themſelves, as *warnings*, *puniſhments*, and *deſerts*, though all is right and juſt, and will doubtleſs appear ſo in the end.

The omniſcient Creator muſt know what is beſt for his creatures: and as he is the Governor of the Univerſe, and has all things under his command, he will aſſuredly make all events turn out for his own glory, and the real benefit and happineſs of his people, 'tis our duty as well as intereſt to believe it.

I cannot leave off, without ſincerely wiſhing you and Mrs. ———, all that felicity, comfort and ſatisfaction this world can give, and eternal happineſs, when time ſhall be no more,

Dorking, Surry,
Auguſt 12.

And remain,

Your's, &c.

LETTER IX.

From the ſame. *Giving an account of the manner he ſpent his time; with an extract from Thompſon's poem on the Summer.*

DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED much pleaſure in reading your's of the 21ſt inſtant, and now according to your requeſt, ſend you an account of the manner I ſpend my time. In the morning I riſe moſt commonly about *ſix*, and go into my ſtudy (which is a ſmall but very pleaſant room, overlooking my garden into a ſpacious meadow, where the ſportive lambs bleat harmleſs through the ever-living verdure) here, after offering up my thankful acknowledgments to the Almighty, for the mercies of the night paſt, and humbly imploring his future

care

care and protection, I ſit down and read for about a quarter of an hour; then, if it is fine weather, I take a walk through the adjacent fields, and enjoy the fragrance of the mellifluent gales that bear on their refreſhing wings from every bud, unnumbered ſweets; while birds in tuneful warblings, hail returning morn; this is a pleaſure unknown to the inhabitants of London, and which buſineſs oftentimes precludes. Indeed the greateſt part of mankind have no reliſh for ſuch an enjoyment, but had rather indulge themſelves in waſting their hours in ſleep; to them it is no loſs, their being deprived of this pleaſure, and therefore cannot be regretted; but to me, who really experience great delight and ſatisfaction in it, 'tis additionally pleaſing and agreeable.*

About a quarter before nine I return home to breakfaſt, after which my dear Eliza joins with me in adoring that unmerited goodneſs and mercy which we can truly ſay, hath thus far followed us all the days of our lives, and continue to heighten that happineſs and felicity which we both have great reaſon to own (with gratitude and

* Early riſing is much to be commended; a walk in the country about 7 o'clock, of a fine ſummer's morning, is not only very healthy, but truly delightful.

praiſe to the divine Author) took place on our union with each other.

DID I not believe you to be my real friend and ſincere well-wiſher with reſpect to *both* worlds, I ſhould not be ſo particular and exact in this part of my account; and as I am certain of your forgiveneſs, ſhould I exceed the uſual length of an epiſtle, I am determined not to conceal the ſmalleſt circumſtance concerning my employments, that I think, in the leaſt, will give you pleaſure in the peruſal, much leſs that part of them which I know you practiſe yourſelf, and therefore cannot but approve.

ABOUT eleven, ſuppoſing it is fine, we take a ride ſeven or eight miles, and then return to dinner; or if not ſo convenient for us *both* to be out, I go by myſelf, but never enjoy half the pleaſure as when ſhe is with me, (there are very few I believe ſo happy with each other now-a-days.)

AFTER dinner I take a turn or two round my garden, and then into an exceeding pleaſant ſummer-houſe, where I have a ſmall collection of books both moral and religious, and two or three different ſorts of teleſcopes, microſcopes, globes, maps, and a mirror for viewing prints, furniſhed with

with a great variety of the fineſt and moſt delightful views England affords.

HERE I employ myſelf till tea, ſometimes in reading books, or writing down thoſe reflections I make upon the ſeveral objects around me, or if it is not very hot, I take my fiſhing tackle and ſpend an hour or two in angling in a fine canal about twenty yards from my houſe, while my dear partner agreeably entertains me with reading *Thompſon's Seaſons*, *Paradiſe Loſt*, or *Hervey's Meditations*, which are our favourite authors.

AFTER tea, (like an old faſhioned couple) we take a walk together, arm in arm, through the flowery meads, to behold the pomp and grandeur of the ſetting ſun, and beguile the paſſing hours in tender and endearing converſe; which always reminds me of thoſe lines in Thompſon's Summer.

. . . . . Social friends,
Attun'd to happy uniſon of ſoul;
To whoſe exalting eye a fairer world,
Of which the vulgar never had a glimpſe,
Diſplays its charms; whoſe minds are richly fraught
With philoſophic ſtores, ſuperior light;
And in whoſe breaſt, enthuſiaſtic, burns

Virtue, the ſons of intereſt deem romance,
Now call'd abroad enjoy the falling day:
Now to the verdant portico of woods,
To nature's vaſt lyceum, forth they walk;
By that kind ſchool where no proud maſter reigns;
The full free converſe of the friendly heart,
Improving and improv'd.

About half paſt ſeven, we return home, and moſt commonly between eight and nine, call our family together, to praiſe the GOD of our mercies for the bleſſings of the paſt day, beg his forgiveneſs for the ſins of it, and implore the continuance of his providential care and protection through the night;* after which we go to ſupper, and about eleven, retire to reſt, while health ſurrounds our dwelling, and ſilence invites repoſe.

I remain,

Dorking,
Auguſt 24.

Dear friend,
Your's ſincerely.

LETTER

* A perſon fond of reading and meditation, of a *ſerious* diſpoſition, and who has a taſte for *poetry, painting, muſic, drawing,* and the like; may always find employment, though retired from buſineſs, and is beſt ſuited to lead a life of *ſolitude* without wearineſs, indolence or inactivity.

LETTER X.

From the ſame. *Wherein he further urges his arguments in defence of a retired life, and concludes with an account of a ſet of poor country people he had determined to relieve.*

DEAR FRIEND,

IN anſwer to your queſtion (what would become of trade and commerce, were all men in buſineſs not only as fond of *retirement* as I am, but left town to enjoy it?) I reply, as it hath pleaſed the great Creator in infinite wiſdom to give a different ſet of features to every man, whereby he may be diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of his fellow creatures with facility and eaſe, to prevent that confuſion, and thoſe numerous miſtakes, which muſt unavoidably ariſe from too great a ſimilarity of perſons, and reſemblance of countenances among men; ſo he hath very wiſely ordained in the courſe of his providence, different *tempers*, *diſpoſitions*, and *inclinations* to different perſons according to the ſeveral ſtations in which he hath placed them in the world; that contentment and ſatisfaction may not be peculiar to *one* ſtation only, but attainable in *all*.

FROM

FROM hence it is, that we often ſee the laborious hind, who may well be ſaid to earn his bread with the ſweat of his brow, as contented (if not far more ſo) when following the plough, as the king upon his throne, ſurrounded by all that the heart can wiſh, want, or deſire, to make it happy; hence it is, that the ſervant is as eaſy in a ſtate of ſervitude, as the maſter in that of independance; or the meaneſt vaſſal as ſatisfied in his daily toil, as the wealthy lord in the enjoyment of riches, grandeur, and magnificence.

IN ſome, *ambition*, or love of glory, ſtimulates to warlike and heroic actions; in others, *avarice*, or deſire of riches, provokes to induſtry, diligence, and application; *neceſſity* obliges many to purſue labour, whilſt *inclination* prompts others to ſeek retirement. That there will always be a ſufficient number, ready and willing to attend to and proſecute the concerns of trade, need not be doubted; therefore your queſtion in your laſt muſt naturally fall to the ground.

INDEED had there been any likelihood of my having many children, I ſhould have eſteemed it my duty to have continued in buſineſs, in order to be enabled to lay up ſomething for each of them,

them, ſuitable to the education they might receive, and their ſeveral ſtations in life. But as there was nothing of this ſort, and enjoying at preſent an eaſy fortune, with an inclination for rural ſolitude and retirement, in which Eliza ſeemed to join with me, unambitious of ſhining in the ball-room, frequenting public diverſions, or glittering at court, I thought I might indulge myſelf herein, without the leaſt deviation from the rules of religion or morality.

I BELIEVE I forgot to mention in my laſt, the ſet of *weekly* penſioners I have choſen to partake of a dinner and one ſhilling each, every Friday throughout the winter, and once a month in the ſummer, with this addition, the 3d of Nov. the day on which my dear partner and I were united, (now ſixteen years ſince) they are to have half a crown a piece given them, to remember the happy day.* This reſolution we intend as a token of our thankfulneſs for the mercies we enjoy, and the grateful ſenſe we retain of the Almighty's goodneſs towards us: for how can the favourites of Heaven better ſhew their gratitude for the bounties of Providence, than in ſongs of praiſe to GOD, and charity to men, according to that text of Scrip-

* A laudable example, worthy imitation; where God has given riches, *Charity*, and *Thankfulneſs* ſhould abound.

Scripture, *To whom much is given, much is required*; or in what manner can we better pleaſe Him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, than in contributing freely to the wants and neceſſities of our fellow creatures in diſtreſs.* I look on the rich and affluent, as the almoners or ſtewards of the moſt High, and therefore cannot but think it their duty, to ſhare their temporal bleſſings with them to whom they are denied, aſſured of the truth of the prophet's words, *Caſt thy bread upon the waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many days.*

UNIVERSAL benevolence or philanthropy, teaches us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and do to others even as we would have them do unto us, knowing that our great Lord and Maſter, ſpeaking of charity, ſaith, *Foraſmuch as ye do it unto the leaſt of theſe little ones, ye do it unto me.* But I will not detain you any longer at preſent:

I remain,

Sept. 9th. Dear friend;

Your's, &c.

LETTER

* Teach me what all believe, but few poſſeſs,
That life's beſt ſcience is *ourſelves to know*;
The firſt of human bleſſings is to *bleſs*,
And happieſt he who feels *another's* woe. *Cooper.*

LETTER XI.

From Miſs B. to a young lady in town, inviting her to ſpend the ſummer with her in the country, with a deſcription of the pleaſures of rural ſolitude.

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

YOU cannot ſurely be ſo immerſed in the amuſements of the town, as to diſlike a ſhort relaxation from them, for a few months, during the ſummer, to oblige a diſtant, though *ſincere* friend, with your agreeable company. I know you too well, to ſuppoſe you can ever be ſo entirely ſwallowed up with balls, plays, or maſquerades, as to forget your real well-wiſhers in the country; no, Charlotte, I have not yet, and hope never ſhall have the leaſt reaſon to harbour ſuch a thought of you; to prevent which, let me beg your acceptance of my invitation to favour me with an early and long viſit in ——— ſhire; where, if a cordial reception and friendly treatment can prevail with you to comply with my requeſt, I ſhall certainly expect to ſee you in *three* weeks time.

THE pleaſures of the country are now daily increaſing, whilſt the diverſions of the town are leſſening apace; the weather is too warm for aſ-

ſemblies,

ſemblies, routs, or plays, and the lengthening days invite to rural ſcenes. Come then and ſpend the ſultry hours with me, ſecured from heat by lofty ſpreading elm-trees, near the pleaſing murmurs of a neighbouring ſtream. Here you may, unmoleſted, enjoy the concert of the groves, and view the works of nature and art without annoy.

HERE, far removed from the noiſe of carts and coaches, the ſmoke of London, and the hurry of trade, we may ſpend the paſſing hours in improving and agreeable converſe, or when the weather permits, in riding, walking, fiſhing, and the like rural and healthy exerciſes. Permit me to tranſcribe ſome lines written a few weeks ago by a young gentleman in our neighbourhood, entitled, The *Pleaſures* of the *country*, with which I will conclude my preſent dull performance.

When ruddy morn unbars the gates of light,
And op'ning proſpects catch the pilgrim's ſight
From yonder hills; the birds on ev'ry ſpray,
In tuneful accents hail the new-born day,
The fields and meadows, wet with evening dews,
Like diamonds glitter with unnumber'd hues;
But ſoon (as beauteous charms which men adore)
The heat encreaſing, they are ſeen no more.

While

Now to their flocks the ſhepherds ſwift repair,
While gentle zephyrs fan the balmy air;
The buſy bees their daily toils renew,
And lab'ring ants their different cares purſue.

Now is the time to walk the diſtant fields,
While every breeze a ſweeter fragrance yields,
To view the beauties of the riſing morn,
And tread the plains which numerous flocks adorn;
To paſs through meadows where the lambkins play,
Or o'er yon hills purſue my early way.
When noon arrives, O ſay, my tender friend,
On whom may every earthly bliſs deſcend,
(My fair Belinda; whoſe is every grace
That charms the ſoul or can adorn the face)
O ſay, how welcome are thoſe cool retreats,
Where we have oft (ſecur'd from ſultry heats
By lofty trees, amongſt the ſweeteſt flow'rs)
In pleaſing converſe ſpent the noon-tide hours;
Or coolly ſeated near a neighb'ring brook,
We've read by turns ſome choſen fav'rite book *
Of *Hervey*, *Milton*, *Thompſon*, *Pope*, or *Gay*,
Or elſe in angling paſt the time away.

WHEN

* A friend, a book, the ſtealing hours ſecure,
And mark them down for wiſdom. *Thomſon's Seaſons.*

WHEN evening comes, how charming 'tis to hear
The tuneful ſongs which ſtrike the liſt'ning ear,
From yonder grove; whilſt every breeze is ſtill,
And echo bears the notes from hill to hill.
When night returns, how pleaſing to behold
The ſky enlighten'd as with ſtuds of gold;
To view the moon begin her nightly round,
And ſhed her pallid luſtre o'er the ground;
How bleſt to ſleep ſecure from noiſe and ſtrife;
Such are the pleaſures of a *country* life.

Harling, I remain,
July 8. Dear Charlotte,
Your's ſincerely.

LETTER XII.

From Florimond to Alcander, his nephew, adviſing him againſt the temptations to which his age and ſituation expoſed him.

DEAR NEPHEW,

AS I not only have a great regard for you, but would willingly manifeſt it on every ſuitable occaſion; permit me to addreſs you, as one who has both your temporal and eternal intereſt

tereſt at heart; as one who has not only paſt through, but is well acquainted with the ſnares and temptations your age and ſtation expoſe you to, hear what the wiſe man ſaith: and lay up his admonitions in thine heart; *Receive my inſtruction, and not ſilver; and wiſdom rather than choice gold; for wiſdom is better than riches.*

PROVIDENCE has placed you in a very promiſing ſituation in life, though ſurrounded with temptations and encompaſſed with allurements.* Remember you are young; your indulgent father was taken from you in a very early period, but your tender and affectionate mother is ſtill continued, I doubt not, as a great bleſſing; Oh! be concerned to prove the ſame to her; endeavour, by your dutiful and endearing behaviour, to make up (as far as lies in your power) the loſs of her much lov'd partner and companion. All her hopes are fixed on you, that you will be a comfort and bleſſing to her, whilſt he is mouldering in the duſt; let your actions prove you worthy of thoſe ſeveral amiable characters, which the Almighty has given you the opportunity of ſupporting as a man and chriſtian; I mean a dutiful ſon, a tender huſband, an indulgent parent, a worthy maſter, and a ſincere friend; by ſo doing you

* Young people cannot be too circumſpect, watchful and determined to reſiſt ſatan and fear the Lord.

you will gain univerſal love, and recommend yourſelf to the favour and approbation of your GOD.*

As youth is the time when appetites and paſſions are ſtrong, too apt to govern, and too often lead aſtray from the paths of innocence and virtue, let me perſuade you, my dear Alcander, to take heed unto your ſteps that you ſlip not; beware of the *firſt* enticements to ſin, thoſe which you may be apt improperly to call *little* ſins, and which you may be led to think GOD will take no notice of; what theſe are, I leave your own conſcience to inform you. Remember that truly juſt obſervation of a latin author,

Nemo repente fuit turpiſſimus,

which is thus engliſhed by Mr. Pope in his Eſſay on Man, epiſtle ii. line 207.

Vice is a monſter of ſo frightful mein,
As to be hated needs but to be ſeen;
Yet ſeen too oft, familiar with her face,
We firſt *endure*, then *pity*, then *embrace*.

Always

* *I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.* Spoken by GOD himſelf, under the metaphor of wiſdom. Prov. viii. 17.

Always retain a deep ſenſe of your inability to think a good thought, or ſpeak a right word of *yourſelf*, and look up to Heaven daily for guidance and direction, according to Solomon's admonition to his ſon, in the third of the Proverbs and the ſixth, *In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He ſhall direct thy ſteps.*

LET the aſſurance of the omniſcience and omnipreſence of JEHOVAH in all places, and at all times (for darkneſs is the ſame as noon-day to Him) keep you ever upon your guard, preſerve you from ſinful compliances and prevent your falling; ſo that when Satan or the world may tempt you to gratify your youthful appetites or paſſions, by ſuggeſting, now is a fine opportunity, no one ſees you, do it now or never; you may be enabled to ſay with pious Joſeph, *How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt* GOD?

WITH reſpect to your buſineſs, be concerned to make it a *pleaſure*, not pleaſure your buſineſs; as a tradeſman, be honeſt, ſober, prudent and diſcreet; leave as little as poſſible to ſervants, knowing that the maſter's eye makes the horſe fat. As a chriſtian, be humble and vigilant in all your actions; *Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation, for your adverſary, the devil, goeth*

goeth about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.

MAKE the Scriptures the rule of your conduct and the welfare of your immortal ſoul your chief concern. I wiſh you well; let me hear from you often, and ſee you whenever it is convenient. I hope your dear and worthy mother is well; tell her I expect a long viſit from her this ſummer, or ſhall think ſhe has quite forgot me.

Aſhted, near *Epſom*, I remain,
July 20.

Your affectionate Uncle.

LETTER XIII.

From Philander to Ariſtus, a merchant; with an account of his brother's death, and the great change it had wrought in him; with the ſpeech his brother made juſt before his diſſolution.

HOWEVER, my dear friend, you may be wholly taken up with the concerns of buſineſs, or purſuits after pleaſure and feſtivity (while you ſail down the tide of affluence with a briſk gale, without a thought of, or preparation for

for an approaching ſtorm, as certain and unavoidable, as it is deſtructive both to paſſenger and veſſel) permit me to remind you, without offence, that you are *mortal*; that after all your toil and anxiety for encreaſing riches, and the meat which periſheth, you muſt ere long die, and leave them to thoſe, who it may be, will have the greateſt reaſon, in the end, to wiſh they had never had them.

You will, I doubt not, be much ſurprized to read ſuch a grave unfaſhionable letter from one, who has ſo often wrote to you upon the moſt gay and diſſipated topics; but your wonder will ceaſe when I tell you my brother died yeſterday morning in all the agonies of ſorrow and deſpair: he who was ſo lately my chief companion in vice and ſenſuality, and who at firſt perſuaded me to join with him in his follies and extravagances, is now no more. *You* well know how he lived, and *I*, how he died; his groans ſtill ſound in my ears, and his laſt words dwell with horror in my mind.

Oh! Sir, though we may at preſent revel in ſin, and account religion no better than a fable, and think futurity an idle tale; there is, I am perſuaded, a time coming, when we ſhall awake

out of this pleaſing dream, and experience our fatal deluſion, (God grant it may not be too late.) That remarkable line in Dr. Young's Night Thoughts, which I was a witneſs to the truth of yeſterday,

Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*,

has, I hope, convinced me of the error of my ways, and brought me to reflect on my paſt life with concern. My brother was taken ill laſt Sunday, with a violent fever, occaſioned (the phyſician apprehends) by exceſſive drinking; as the Friday before, he ſpent the evening with ſeveral of his unthinking aſſociates, and did not return home till between one and two the next morning, much diſguiſed in liquor. As it happened, I was prevented accompanying him *that* evening, or I might have been as bad myſelf.

As he was the *eldeſt* ſon, my father (as is commonly done, but for what reaſon I will not pretend to ſay) left him the greateſt ſhare of his eſtate; which he has very conſiderably leſſened by his expenſive way of living, being brought up to no buſineſs (another vulgar error) and having no reliſh for the rational amuſements of life,

life, but wholly given up to idleneſs and diſſipation.* He was never happier in his own opinion, than when in the purſuit of ſenſual pleaſures, the ruin of innocence, or the intoxicating fumes of the bowl. Happy, thrice happy for me, had I looked on his vices with as much deteſtation and abhorrence before I liſtened to his deſtructive admonitions and followed his deſtructive courſes, as I do now; but oh! with what heart-felt concern, I often recollect thoſe expreſſive lines, and by ſad experience, am too well convinced of their veracity,

"*He that once ſins, like him who ſlides on ice,*
"*Goes ſwiftly down the ſlippery paths of vice;*
"*Though conſcience checks him, yet thoſe rubs got o'er,*
"*He ſins ſecurely and looks back no more*†."

Dryden.

* However parents may have fortunes ſufficient to place their ſons in ſtations of *affluence*, above the neceſſity of attending to the concerns of *trade*; they ought always to bring them up to ſome avocation or employment; the reaſon is obvious, *idleneſs* is the bane of youth.

† Theſe lines can never be too often, nor too well remembered and attended to, eſpecially by *youth*.

DELUDED with a falſe notion of pleaſure, my youth got the better of my reaſon; and I was led captive by—I tremble at the thought, my *brother*; he whom I ſhould have laſt ſuſpected of being my ſeducer into ruin; he who might have been my greateſt friend; but oh! with what horror muſt I think, was my greateſt *enemy*. But he is gone, and I forgive him; may GOD forgive him. However, his wicked life was my only copy, may his death be *my* everlaſting advantage, and his unſpeakable and eternal gain.

THE words he uttered juſt before his diſſolution, in a flood of tears, were to this purpoſe, addreſſing himſelf to me: "Oh! Philander, my only and much-lov'd brother, 'twas me, wretched and undone creature as I am, that in your early years drew you into ſin—not ſatisfied with being ruined myſelf, I took all the pains I could to bring you into the ſame condemnation. You have the greateſt reaſon to hate, to *curſe* me; but I ſincerely beg pardon of GOD, of *you*, and my own ſoul. Pray for me if you can, though I don't deſerve it; pity me, loſt and *forever* miſerable as I muſt be (if the Almighty does not forgive me.) I have lived unmindful of the only thing that could make a dying bed, in any meaſure calm and eaſy"

"I HAVE

" I HAVE forgot GOD, and now what can " I expect but that he will forget me; for " though he is merciful, he muſt and will be " *juſt*.* Oh! my dear Philander, be aſſured " from the laſt words of a brother, (if I deſerve " that title) on the verge of immortality, no- " thing can yield you the leaſt conſolation, in " the views of the grave, but religion—*that reli-* " *gion* which *I* have totally diſregarded, and " taught *you* to ridicule and deſpiſe.

" HAPPY for me, if the pains I now feel, " and the raging burnings of my preſent diſeaſe, " could atone for the profligacy of my paſt con- " duct, and exempt me from that flaming fire " which never ſhall be quenched; but no, they " cannot, it is impoſſible. I am now fully con- " vinced of that juſt obſervation, *He that ſwims* " *in ſin ſhall ſink in ſorrow.* Oh! let my death, " which you will ſoon be a witneſs of, lead you " to conſider before it is too late, that there is " a *future* never-ending ſtate of happineſs and " miſery beyond the grave, awaiting all: that

* For goodneſs in exceſs muſt be a ſin,
Juſtice muſt tame, whom mercy cannot win.
Earl of Halifax.

A GOD all mercy is a GOD unjuſt. *Young.*

" virtue and piety alone can lead you to the " *firſt*,* and vice and ſenſuality bring you to the " latter. Farewell—forever."

HERE he was overwhelmed with grief, and about an hour after expired——Forgive my tears, for I really loved him. I cannot proceed——

Adieu,

Your's Philander.

LETTER XIV.

From Miſs R. to a young lady in the country, deſcribing the pleaſures and amuſements of the town, contraſted with thoſe of a country life.

DEAR FRIEND,

FORGIVE me if I ſay I envy your ſituation, ſurrounded with the innocent delights and enjoying the undiſturbed tranquillity of the country, whilſt I (much againſt my inclination) am daily hurried from one inſipid diverſion to another,

* Our life is ſhort, but to extend that ſpan
To vaſt eternity, is *Virtue*'s work. *Shakeſpear.*

another, merely to pleaſe the fancy of a near relation, under whoſe care (ſhe having taken a great liking to me) my father hath thought proper to place me. Her name is Alton, a maiden lady, about forty, with a very genteel fortune; and I muſt confeſs, uſes me as well and tenderly as if I was her own daughter, though through a miſtaken propenſity to gaiety and parade, keeps a great number of ſervants, frequents public diverſions, and dreſſes both herſelf and me in the richeſt ſilks ſhe can procure. It may be you think, I ought not, out of gratitude for her kindneſs, to complain of her; I ſhould not, did her taſte lay a different way from what it does, if ſhe evidenced as much concern for the improvement of my *mind*, as ſhe is ſolicitous for the adorning of my body, and giving me a taſte for the ſeveral amuſements in vogue; but oh! my dear Cephiſa, ſeldom or never do theſe intereſting topics come upon the carpet.

A COMPLAINT of this nature from a young woman in the bloom of life, is very uncommon I own, and might appear rather ridiculous and methodiſtical to the greateſt part of mankind; but to you, who have had a *religious* education, and been brought up in the ſame manner with myſelf, I am certain it muſt ſeem too melancholy

and affecting, to be paſt over in ſilence. But you may probably aſk, if the way of life I am now in, is ſo diſagreeable to me, why don't I mention it to my father? Undoubtedly I ſhould, had I not ſome reaſon to hope it would ſoon be altered; for the ſummer being far advanced, Mrs. Alton talks of going out of town in about a fortnight's time, to ſpend the remainder of it at her country ſeat in *Warwickſhire*, a delightful place indeed; (I was there laſt ſummer upon a viſit with my father.)

THE gardens are laid out in the moſt rural manner I ever ſaw: here I promiſe myſelf ſome pleaſure, even in the thought of being deprived the opportunity of frequenting public diverſions, and entirely ſecluded from the ſmoak and noiſe of London. But what will greatly tend to leſſen the felicity of my rural ſituation is, the ſad reflection of being ſo far diſtant from my father, brother, and ſiſters, and deprived of the company of my dear engaging friend; yet this I cannot but perſuade myſelf, will be in ſome meaſure made up by the inſtructive and obliging correſpondence of both parties.

WHEN in town, you did, and I know would often have called on me had I continued there; but

but ſoon we ſhall be at ſo great a diſtance from each other, that I *muſt* not, nor *cannot reaſonably* expect it. At preſent I am chiefly taken up in reading Clariſſa, Grandiſon, &c. to my fair guardian; or going in the evening to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, &c. where the height of pleaſure is reckoned to conſiſt in ſeeing and being ſeen; but you need not be informed what diverſions theſe places afford, having been at each of them yourſelf, and left them without the leaſt concern or regret, as a ſad contraſt to the unmoleſted retirements of rural ſolitude. I am,

Queen-Square. My dear Friend,
June 18. Your's, &c.

LETTER XV.

From Cleander, in rural ſcenes, to Philos, in the capitol, with an ode on health, which he wrote in one of his evening walks.

DEAR FRIEND,

THOUGH in the midſt of every pleaſure that ſylvan retirement can afford, I cannot reſt ſatisfied without writing to you, that I may have the wiſhed-for opportunity of peru-

ſing your entertaining letters, fraught with all that elegance of ſtile and perſpicuity of compoſition, which runs (in ſo eminent a manner) through your literary productions. You may believe me (for flattery is my averſion) nothing can add more to my preſent retired happineſs than the company and converſation of my dear friend, and when unavoidably deprived of theſe, the receipt of his uſeful and amuſing epiſtles.

My preſent ſituation, as it ſecludes me from the noiſe and hurry of a crouded city, and leaves me to my own reflections without diſturbance, ſuits far better with my inclination, than my former way of life, but has this inconvenience attending it, preventing me ſeeing my friends as often as I could wiſh; which can only be alleviated in *ſome* meaſure by their kind correſpondence: this, as it is in their power to favour me with, I hope to enjoy whenever opportunity ſuits, with that inward pleaſure and delight, which true friendſhip alone can reliſh or afford.

I have juſt been taking a ſerious walk in one of the fineſt evenings the ſummer has afforded; the verdant fields, the flowery meadows, and the warbling ſongſters of the groves, all conſpired to render walking pleaſant and agreeable. My reflections

flections as I paſt along, were on the wonderful works of GOD in the Creation, and the greatneſs of the bleſſing of a good ſtate of health,* without which all nature would be but as a blank, and every enjoyment uſeleſs and inſipid. (*a*)

WHOLLY ſwallowed up in theſe contemplations, I ſat down on a graſſy hillock, by the ſide of an hedge intermingled with various ſweet ſmelling flowers; and in the height of a poetical reverie, wrote the following lines, which I take the liberty of ſending you for your peruſal and opinion of; I ſtile them,

AN ODE ON HEALTH.

I.

HEALTH is a rich and heav'nly gift,
  Deſcending from on high;
Which empty titles cannot gain,
  Nor ſordid riches buy.

---

* The ſalt of life, which does to all a reliſh give. *Cowley.*

(*a*) Mankind, as you vouchſafe to ſmile or frown,
Find eaſe in chains, or anguiſh in a crown. *Earl.*

II.

Health is the parent of content,
Compoſer of our ſtrife;
Adds ſweetneſs to our joys below,
Without it, what is life?

III.

Health is the child of temperance,
And prudence is it's nurſe;
To *worldly* men, depriv'd of this,
Exiſtence ſeems a curſe.

IV.

Health is the ſunſhine of the ſoul,
And body's ſweet repoſe;
In meaſure 'twill remove our griefs,
And ſoften all our woes.

V.

Health is a bleſſing highly priz'd,
By thoſe who know its loſs;
Without it, honours, wealth and fame,
Are vain and empty droſs.

VI.

Health is the rich man's needed friend,
The poor, their only wealth;
'Twill double all enjoyments here,
So great a bleſſing's Health.

VII.

VII.

Ever praiſe the LORD, my ſoul,
For this his gift to me;
Oh! may his praiſes be my theme,
Thro' all eternity.

I fear I have already tired your patience, or would have ſent you my thoughts on this ſubject in proſe; at preſent permit me to conclude with ſtiling myſelf,

Totneſs, Your real friend and
Devonſhire, ſincere well-wiſher to command,
July 10. Cleander.

LETTER XVI.

From Miſs L. to a young Lady in town, giving an account of a gentleman's falling in love with her ſiſter who was married; concluding with an ode on Friendſhip, which he ſent her incloſed in a letter, lamenting his imprudence in the moſt pathetic terms.*

MY DEAR BELINDA,

FORGIVE me troubling you with the following ſtory, which, though it may not be entertaining, is too true, and has cauſed my ſiſter much

* The author is very ſorry the above letter has been thought cenſurable, as it was inſerted merely for the ſake of the arguments it contains, to diſcourage thoſe libertine principles, ſo faſhionably prevalent in the preſent wicked and *adulterous* generation.

much ſorrow and concern. A young gentleman in our neighbourhood, greatly beloved and reſpected by all his acquaintance, came to ſee my brother about ſix weeks ago, for the firſt time ſince his marriage. It happened that he was out; my ſiſter, as ſhe knew who he was, and on what account he came, begged him to ſtay, telling him ſhe expected Mr. —— home in half an hour's time. He complied, and entered into a very pleaſing converſation with my ſiſter and me, on the happineſs of a country life, and the benefits of ſolitude and retirement; which ſubjects he diſcuſſed in ſuch a ſenſible and entertaining manner, that could not fail of being agreeable to both of us. He drank tea, and ſtaid till between ſeven and eight o'clock, when Mr. —— not coming home, he took his leave, begging his compliments to him, and that he would call another time.

About a week afterwards he came again, and found my brother at home; this afternoon he was dreſſed extremely genteel indeed, and being a tall likely young man, looked to great advantage. Mr. —— received him with all the politeneſs of a courtier, and at the ſame time with the pleaſure and affection of a real friend. They converſed together I believe till near nine o'clock

this

this evening; my ſiſter and I were in the room moſt of the time, and he was obſerved often to ſmile at my ſiſter and direct his diſcourſe to her, but this was thought nothing particular of, as my brother knew him to be a ſober and deſerving young gentleman: however, when he went away, he gave my ſiſter one or two very expreſſive and tender looks (unobſerved by Mr. ——) which put her into great confuſion.

He repeated his viſits every week afterwards, till within theſe few days, under pretence of juſt calling as he went by, always enquiring how Mrs. —— did, if he did not happen to ſee her, which made me ſuſpicious there was ſomething more in his viſits, than either of us at firſt thought of, though he always behaved in a becoming manner, and ſeemed only deſirous of being accounted a *friend*. Indeed he uſed often to aſk my brother to make a party with my ſiſter and me, and ſpend a day or two with him at his country houſe in Oxfordſhire (an eſtate his father left him about a year and a half ago) which Mr. —— promiſed to do before the end of the ſummer; but to our great ſurprize, my ſiſter received a letter yeſterday morning, which when ſhe opened, ſhe found was from him. As it may be your deſire to know the contents of it, I ſend

you

you the following copy, together with ſome verſes which were incloſed, begging the favour of you not to ſhew them to any one, as my ſiſter is deſirous to have them kept a ſecret from the world, leſt Mr. —— hearing of it, ſhould make himſelf uneaſy on the account.

" Too amiable Maria,

" THE heart-felt pleaſure and ſatisfaction I " have lately enjoyed in your agreeable company " and converſe, too plainly evinces the ardour " of my affection for *one*, who (as ſhe is unal- " terably engaged for life) cannot with the leaſt " pretence to prudence and diſcretion, make any " returns for ſuch an unhappy paſſion; which " though I know and acknowledge, to be im- " properly fixt upon ſo unwarrantable an object, " yet am not able to ſubdue it; ſuch (too dear " Maria) is the force of youthful eſteem, too " early cheriſhed and imbibed in a tender breaſt, " and ſo imprudently encouraged. I condemn " myſelf a thouſand times, for having given it " the leaſt room in my more thoughtful mo- " ments, eſpecially as I'm convinced of its un- " lawfulneſs, and how contrary it is to thoſe " ſacred principles I have been educated in, and " profeſs to follow. But what ſhall I, what can " I ſay? To attempt to excuſe myſelf, would

" only

" only be to aggravate my crime; to endeavour
" to extenuate its guilt, the means of making
" it appear the blacker: all that I can offer in
" my own defence, I am certain, is only the
" pleadings of corrupt nature; and that common
" obſervation, we cannot command our paſſions.
" But however frequently this may be adopted
" by the ſenſualiſts of the age, yet how vain
" and inſignificant muſt it appear in the eyes
" of ſenſible (not to ſay) *religious* men; ſuch
" language is a queſtioning the Almighty's wiſ-
" dom in the formation of our paſſions, and
" murmuring at his works, as though they were
" imperfect, which is as impious as it is abſurd,
" and borders upon infidelity, immorality, and
" profaneneſs.——

" THE prudent behaviour with which you
" have always treated me, has made me appear
" ridiculous even to myſelf, and the proper ob-
" ject of your juſt contempt and hatred: had
" you behaved otherwiſe, we both might have
" been ruined; but that reſpectful diſtance and
" veneration your words and actions inculcated
" and enforced, has been, I hope, the means of
" reclaiming me from the moſt iniquitous pur-
" ſuits, and taught me, my own weakneſs, folly

" and

" and imprudence, in encouraging an eſteem ſo
" oppoſite to every law, human and divine.

" THAT you are worthy of the beſt of huſ-
" bands, I am fully perſuaded, and happy in
" ſeeing you poſſeſt of; but oh! how often do
" I repent the moment I firſt admitted this puerile
" eſteem to take place and deſtroy my peace?
" how have I ſtruggled with myſelf to overcome
" it, but in vain! all the arguments that con-
" ſcience alledged againſt it, every conſideration
" religion afforded to diſſuade me from it, were
" fruitleſs and ineffectual.

" I HAVE for ſome weeks paſt indulged an af-
" fection I cannot but diſapprove, and am fully
" convinced of my error, without a power to
" reform; with what readineſs have I argued
" againſt it, and painted its odiouſneſs in the
" ſtrongeſt colours, but to no purpoſe, the tu-
" mult of my troubled mind increaſes daily, and
" what will be the conſequence I cannot tell,
" where it will end, GOD only knows. Con-
" ſcious that I deſerve your ſcorn, I ſtand ſelf-
" condemned; but if your relenting diſpoſition
" can pity my deplorable ſituation, I earneſtly
" intreat your compaſſion and forgiveneſs. Your
" good ſenſe and affability, together with your
" agreeable

" agreeable perſon and addreſs, all conſpire
" againſt me, and every renewed viſit does but
" heighten my eſteem, in oppoſition to that in-
" difference it is my duty to encourage. As yet,
" I have (in ſome meaſure) ſtifled my paſſion;
" ſhould it encreaſe, I muſt tear myſelf from you
" —forever. Your acceptance of the following
" lines, written on your favourite ſubject, will
" be the only favour I ſhall ever preſume to aſk;
" and greatly oblige one, whom you know no-
" thing worſe of, than his fixing his affections
" upon *you*."

AN ODE ON FRIENDSHIP.

I.

Friendſhip, thou dear and much lov'd name,
Aſſiſt my early lays;
Inſpir'd with thy angelic flame,
I fain would ſing thy praiſe.
O thou ineſtimable gift to men,
Celeſtial goddeſs, aid my feeble pen.

II.

Friendſhip, thou balm of every woe,
And ſoftner of our pains;
Who heightens all our joys below,
Forgive theſe humble ſtrains;
Oh! ſpeak the bleſſings which thy ſteps attend,
Say what's contain'd in that one word—a *Friend*.

III. Friend

III.

Friendſhip alone in deep diſtreſs,
Will eaſe the painful heart;
For every trouble ſeems the leſs,
When friendſhip bears a part.*
She ſtops the progreſs of increaſing ſtrife,
And adds new reliſh to the ſweets of life.

IV.

Friendſhip alone in every grief
Partakes a willing ſhare;
In ſickneſs yields a kind relief,
And comforts in deſpair.
When thro' unſeen misfortunes wealth declines,
In poverty *true* friendſhip brighteſt ſhines.

V.

Friendſhip the ſinking ſpirits chears,
And ſtills the anxious breaſt;
In danger will remove our fears
And give our ſorrows reſt.
Tho' ſore afflictions ſeize the vital frame,
Friendſhip remains unchangeably the ſame.

VI. Friend-

* . . . . . Who knows the joys of friendſhip?
The truſt, ſecurity, and mutual tenderneſs,
The double joys, where each is glad for both. *Rowe.*

VI.

Friendſhip in every ſtate and age,
Will ever welcome prove;
The mind with all its powers engage,
And melt the ſoul to love.
O ſing her praiſe, ye angels tell her worth,
A life of friendſhip is a heav'n on earth.*

YOUR patience, my dear Belinda, muſt be greater than Job's, not to be quite exhauſted in reading ſo long an epiſtle; therefore, *ſans ceremonie*, Adieu.

Briſtol, July 16.

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* Celeſtial Happineſs, whene'er ſhe ſtoops
To viſit earth, one ſhrine the goddeſs finds,
And one alone, to make her ſweet amends
For abſent Heav'n,—the boſom of a *friend*;
Where heart meets heart reciprocally ſoft,
Each other's pillow to repoſe divine.

Young's Night Thoughts.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

From Miſs I. to a relation in town, giving an account of the death of an amiable young lady, an intimate friend of her's, with an epitaph made on her, by a young gentleman in the neighbourhood.

DEAR COUSIN,

IT may be you have heard of the death of my intimate friend Miſs M. but leſt you ſhould not, I take this opportunity to inform you ſhe died laſt Tueſday, about four o'clock in the afternoon. She was taken ill the Wedneſday before with a violent cold, which terminated in a high fever the Saturday following. At times ſhe was delirious, but when in her ſenſes, no one could be more patient and reſigned.

HER ſiſter (by her deſire) ſent for me laſt Sunday, juſt as I came from church in the morning; I ſaw their man coming along, and overtaking me as I got to our door, he told me his meſſage with ſeemingly great concern; the ſubſtance of which was, that Miſs M. was extremely ill indeed, and deſired to ſee me to take her leave of me, as ſhe did not expect to live but a few hours. You may be ſure the news filled me with ſorrow, anxiety

anxiety and ſurprize; as I was with her but the Tueſday before, when ſhe was quite chearful and well. After acquainting my father with the meſſage, I went immediately to their houſe, and being conducted by a weeping ſervant to the melancholy chamber, found Mrs. L. her ſiſter, ſitting by the bed-ſide diſſolved in tears. The phyſician had been there and was juſt gone, after having pronounced the fever dangerous.

As ſoon as ſhe ſaw me, ſhe attempted to ſpeak; the violence of her grief ſtopped her utterance, and after waving her hand three or four times, loſt her ſenſes and raved for about ten minutes, then fell into a gentle doze and ſlept near half an hour. When ſhe awaked ſhe ſeemed better, but very low; on ſeeing how much the ſight of me affected her, I thought it moſt proper to go into another room till ſhe recovered herſelf, which I did.

WHEN ſhe found me gone ſhe aſked her ſiſter where I was, and being told, deſired with great earneſtneſs to ſee me. When I went to the bed-ſide to her, ſhe took hold of my hand, and ſaid, looking on me with much tenderneſs and concern, —"My *dear*, *dear* friend, little did I think laſt Tueſday of your ſeeing me ſo ſoon, in the alarming

ſituation

ſituation I am now in; but we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. Forgive my ſending for you, to behold a ſight, the moſt painful and diſtreſſing to human nature, the dying agonies of (one I know you account) a dear friend; but it was my ſtrong affection for you, which made it impoſſible for me to think of leaving all things here, without taking a laſt, a long farewell of *you*.—Death appears not terrible to me, but the parting with thoſe whom I truly, love, and by whom I know myſelf beloved, cuts me to the heart." Here ſhe was again overcome with grief, and unable to proceed; upon which, telling her I would return in a ſhort time, I left her and went home, with eyes ſwollen with tears, and a heart big with ſorrow.

On calling the next morning to know how ſhe did, they informed me ſhe was much worſe, the fever greatly encreaſed, and very little in her ſenſes. I thought it would be of no ſervice to go up to ſee her, therefore I went back again, and as ſoon as I got into my room, gave way to a genuine and unfeigned concern. Monday night the phyſician ſaid ſhe would change very ſoon for the better or worſe, which ſhe did *indeed*, about four o'clock on Tueſday morning, when ſhe appeared on the verge of her diſſolution, and

continued growing worſe till the time ſhe died, taking leave of her ſiſter about three o'clock in the afternoon, in a very affectionate and pathetic manner, and deſiring her to tell *me*, ſhe hoped to renew our friendſhip in Heaven. About half an hour after, ſhe was in extreme pain, in the height of which ſhe calls out to her ſiſter, "My dear Betſy, join with me in praying for the beſt of bleſſings on my dear father, you, my dear friend Miſs I. and all mankind;" then taking hold of her hand, kiſſed it ſeveral times heartily, and lifting up her eyes and hands, with her ſiſter's incloſed in them, to Heaven, ſhe attempted to pray; but the violence of her diſorder took away her ſenſes, and ſhe continued ſo till her death.

HER ſiſter never left her room, from the time I was there on Sunday. I cannot but ſympathiſe with her, for ſhe is quite inconſolable. The following epitaph was made on her by a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, which (as it appears the real dictates of ſympathetic friendſhip and eſteem) I ſend for your peruſal.

THE author is to be ſuppoſed ſitting in a thoughtful poſture, but on hearing the bell toll from a neighbouring ſteeple, ſtarts and ſays,

What ſounds are theſe which ſtrike my liſt'ning
ears,
Awake my ſorrows and alarm my fears,
From yonder ſteeple? 'Tis the diſmal knell
Of ſome departed ſpirit; who can tell
But now the deathleſs being dwells above,
In endleſs regions of eternal love,
(Beyond the reach of every human pain,
Whoſe loſs to friends, is her ſuperior gain?)
It does, for Oh!—the dear *Maria*'s dead;
To realms of joy the bleſſed ſpirit's fled.

SHE's gone, ſhe's gone; aſſiſt my feeble lays,
Ye ſacred nine, to ſing her matchleſs praiſe
In plaintive ſtrains. Oh! lend your ſkilful aid,
Celeſtial muſes, every tuneful maid
Join in the mournful ſong, with grief deplore,
Maria's dead, and muſic is no more,
Maria's dead, repeat from ſhore to ſhore.
Maria's dead, in doleful accents cry,
Maria's dead let hills and dales reply;*
Ye neighb'ring meads, the ſadd'ning meſſage tell,
Maria's gone, ye green retreats farewell;
Ye pleaſant fields, where oft ſhe us'd to ſtray,
Be cloth'd no more in ſummer's bright array;

Ye

* This is imitated from Pope's fourth Paſtoral, ſtiled the Winter.

Ye lofty trees, without your leaves appear,
Maria's gone, be winter all the year;
Ye ſhady groves in wither'd garbs deplore,
Maria's gone, and verdure is no more.

BUT oh! what words can paint the *ſiſter*'s grief,
Or yield the weeping fair the leaſt relief?
Too lovely mourner, ſpeak her real worth,
Who ſhar'd her beſt affections while on earth.
O tell what numbers mourn her early fate,
How much belov'd in this imperfect ſtate?
Say, how ſubmiſſively ſhe bore the rod,
How ſoon ſhe gave *herſelf*, her *all* to GOD;
Speak thou, who waſt till death her greateſt friend,
What numerous ſorrows did thy boſom rend;
When the dread fever rag'd in every vein,
And reaſon left her overwhelm'd in pain;
How did her flowing tears thy grief renew,
When ſenſible of death, ſhe ſaid—Adieu;
While pleaſing hopes her lively faith ſupply'd,
She took her laſt farewell, and calmly died.

BUT oh! my tender friend, wipe every tear,
For tho' *ſhe*'s gone, your *Jeſus* ſtill is near;
Then let this thought revive your drooping heart;
You'll meet her ſoon above, no more to part.

Forgive my detaining you ſo long, and believe me to be with the greateſt ſincerity,

Stortford, Aug. 17. Your affectionate Couſin.

LETTER XVIII.

From Sobrina to a friend, in anſwer to a queſtion, What pleaſures are to be enjoyed in ſolitude and retirement? with an extract from Thompſon's Seaſons.

DEAR MIRA,

THOUGH you are prejudiced in favour of the town, from your fondneſs of its diverſions and amuſements, I can ſay, from pleaſing experience, with our great poet, Milton,

Solitude ſometimes is *beſt* ſociety.*

You ſeem to wonder at my dullneſs of taſte, as you are pleaſed to term it, and would fain perſuade

* O ſolitude, bleſt ſtate of life below,
Friend to our thought, and balm of every woe;
Here luſt no object for its fires can gain,
And pride wants gazers to admire her train. *Browne.*

ſuade me, true pleaſures are only to be enjoyed in London. But you muſt forgive me if I differ from you here; there are pleaſures in *ſolitude* which none but lovers of it know; true felicity has been always eſteemed of a *retired* nature, and an enemy to grandeur, pomp and noiſe; therefore chiefly found in the ſilent receſſes of the country, where every thing is calculated to inſtill calmneſs, ſerenity, and delight into the thoughtful mind. But it is far above my poor abilities to deſcribe the happineſs of rural retirement; therefore, to anſwer the queſtion in your laſt, permit me, my dear friend, to tranſcribe ſome lines out of my favourite author Thompſon; where painting the enjoyments of a country life, in his poem on the Autumn, he ſays

Oh! knew he but his happineſs, of men
The happieſt he! who far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,
Drinks the pure pleaſures of a rural life.
. . . . . .
Sure peace is his; a ſolid life eſtrang'd
To diſappointment, and fallacious hope;
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
In herbs and fruits; whatever greens the Spring,
When Heaven deſcends in ſhowers; or bends the bough,

When ſummer reddens, and when Autumn beams;
Or in the Wintry glebe whatever lies
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richeſt ſap;
Theſe are not wanting; nor the milky drove,
Luxuriant ſpread o'er all the lowing vale;
Nor bleating mountains, nor the chide of ſtreams,
And hum of bees, inviting ſleep ſincere
Into the guiltleſs breaſt, beneath the ſhade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay.
Here too dwells ſimple truth; plain innocence;
Unſullied beauty; ſound unbroken youth,
Patient of labour, with a little pleas'd;
Health ever blooming; unambitious toil;
Calm contemplation, and poetic eaſe.

Forgive the length of this quotation; but as nothing I ever met with, ſuits better with my ideas of the happineſs of ſolitude, I could not forbear tranſcribing it at full length. All I wiſh is, that by reflecting on the juſtneſs and propriety of the above deſcription, you may become a proſelyte to my way of thinking, and adopt ſentiments worthy the regard of a rational and immortal being, formed for higher and more noble purpoſes,

poſes, than to be a ſlave to pleaſure, or the gaze of fools. I remain,

Froome,
Somerſetſhire,
June 25.

My dear Mira,
Your's, &c.
Sobrina.

LETTER XIX.

From Mira to Sobrina, ridiculing her notions of retirement; imitated from Mrs Rowe's Letters, Moral and Entertaining.

BLESS me, dear Sobrina, what has turn'd your brain now, all of a ſudden? you have got ſomething in your head more than common to be ſure, to be ſo ſtrenuous an advocate for *retirement*, as you call it; Lord! how you talk about it, what in life has poſſeſt you, to make a ſolitary recluſe of your dear ſelf, late ſo lively, chearful and gay; now a demure, melancholy, (and I could find it in my heart to add) *ſtupid* creature; in love with nothing but hedges, fields and green trees; and wrapt up in the devout offices of a female hermit.

WELL, ſurely you muſt be bewitched, or out of your ſenſes, (the beſt excuſes I can think of) to ſeclude yourſelf in the country, far from every thing worth enjoying, at a great diſtance from your friends and every amuſement, and loſt to all ſociety, but your ruſticated tenants, and the tithe-gathering parſon of the pariſh, a man of no great politeneſs, I ſhould ſuppoſe, from his diſtance from town, the centre of all true politeneſs and good breeding.

I can't imagine, for the life of me, what you find to employ your time in, what can you do with yourſelf all the live-long day? I ſhould be apt to think you was grown melancholy mad, if I didn't know to the contrary.

YOU that a year or two ago, was all gaiety and humour, and the life of the company, to bury yourſelf alive in an old manſion-houſe, an hundred miles from London, merely becauſe your brother died and left you the eſtate; bleſs me, my dear Sobrina, do recollect yourſelf a little, and don't give up all pretenſions to ſocial life; don't for heaven's ſake, deprive thoſe (who once thought themſelves happy in your acquaintance) of the pleaſure of your ſprightly converſation; what

have

have we all done to deſerve this treatment from you? have we forfeited your eſteem and friendſhip by any indiſcretion or neglect?

But it may be ſome *religious qualm* has come over you, and taken away your reliſh for the buſy world, and all its tumultuous pleaſures, to ſpeak in your own language; if that is the caſe, (tho' I can hardly believe it is) I really pity you from the bottom of my heart, and wiſh you well out of your *ſpiritual vapours*; but not to detain you longer from your rural *elyſium*, and in the hopes of ſeeing you (after being heartily ſick of retirement) once more make one in the *beaumonde*, I remain,

Sincerely your's,

Pall-Mall, Mond. Afternoon. MIRA.

P. S. Excuſe brevity as I'm dreſſing to go with the two Miſs M's to Mrs. Cornely's paradiſe.

LETTER XX.

To Crito, a young gentleman, mourning the loſs of an indulgent father.

DEAR SIR,

THE Almighty has in the courſe of his all-wiſe diſpenſations, thought fit to deprive you of a tender indulgent father, whoſe chief concern was to ſee you walk in the paths of virtue and religion: one whoſe precepts and example you will do well to imitate and follow, as a proof of your regard and affection for ſo valuable a parent.

Weep you may, I know you cannot refrain, when you think how much he loved you, how earneſt and ſolicitous he was for the advancement and promotion of your temporal and eternal welfare; but what will tears avail towards making up the loſs you have ſuſtained, or leſſening the greatneſs of it? nothing. He only, who has made you fatherleſs, can be more than a father to you: implore his guidance and protection, make conſcience of addreſſing him at all times and in every trouble; he will be a GOD at hand, and not afar off.

LET

LET the image of the father, eminently appear in the life and converſation of the ſon, and be reflected by his amiable conduct and behaviour; truſt not to your own judgment with reſpect to affairs of importance; you have relations and friends, who have your real and beſt intereſt at heart, conſult and adviſe with them; they have ſeen and know more of the world than you can poſſibly be ſuppoſed to know, therefore better able to warn you of the dangers, ſnares and temptations, to which you will be unavoidably expoſed, and liable to fall into in your paſſage through life; obſerve their admonitions and value their inſtructions; * ſhew your good ſenſe, prudence, and underſtanding, by paying a ſuitable deference and reſpect to their opinion and counſel.

Walk circumſpectly, *live* holineſs as well as *profeſs* it; endeavour to be an ornament in the ſtation Providence has placed you; recommend the doctrines of the Goſpel to others, by your exemplary walk and converſation, ſo ſhall your father's GOD be *your* GOD, and after death, your ever

* In the multitude of counſellors there is ſafety. *Prov.* xi. 14.

ever bliſsful portion, which is the earneſt deſire and prayer of

Hampſtead, Sept. 10. Your ſincere Friend.

LETTER XXI.

To Cleanthes, with a ſpecimen of a poem in blank verſe, on health and ſolitude, by a youth.

FRIEND CLEAN.

AS I know you are pleaſed with the productions of younger minds, eſpecially where piety ſeems to direct the pen; permit me to ſend you the following firſt attempts of a young gentleman, the ſon of a friend of mine, written (after recovery from a fit of illneſs) on health and ſolitude, in blank verſe; which, if it meets with your approbation, ſhall take the liberty of ſending you the remainder of it the firſt opportunity.

O thou the beſt of earthly bleſſings, *Health!*
Celeſtial gift! but on a few beſtow'd,
Thou ſweetner of our ſorrows, hail! to thee
I dedicate my early lay, and ſtrive to ſing,
In humble verſe, thy praiſe. Ye ſacred nine,

Har-

Harmonic ſiſters, lend your pleaſing aid,
And warm my ſoul with true poetic fire;
Teach me to mount as on an eagle's wing,
And catch ſeraphic ardor from on high.

THE man how bleſt! who on ſome rural plain,
Lives undiſturb'd, from all diſorders free,
Breathes the freſh air, and drinks the cooling ſpring,
Eſtrang'd to ſickneſs, and to grief unknown;
Far from the ceaſeleſs din, the noiſe and ſtriſe
Of crouded cities, and the haunts of trade,
Where induſtry unweary'd ſtill purſues,
Thro' every varied ſcene the means of gain.

THUS let me ſpend the few remaining hours
Which Providence indulgent may prolong,
While anxious cares and every ſore diſtreſs,
Which daily wait on mortals here below,
Reach not the peaceful cottage where I dwell.
What's life? with all the pleaſures of the world,
Without this grand reſtorative of bliſs,
This greateſt bleſſing lent to man below?
'Tis all a viſionary tranſcient good,
Well ſtil'd a *dream*, a bubble quickly broke,
To every blaſt expos'd, to every wind
A prey.—Oh! grant me then, thou great Supreme,

This

This chief enjoyment to poſſeſs it long.
Tho' not a ſtranger to the numerous pains
Which fleſh is ſubject to, and all the woes
That conſtant wait on frail mortality.

. . . . . .

I remain dear Sir,

Nottingham,
July 10. Your's to command.

LETTER XXII.

From Raltimond to Florolet, with reflections on the works of Providence, and the weakneſs of human wiſdom, a fragment.

LOOKING over ſome papers in my ſtudy this morning, I found the following extract from the Ledger, on the works of Creation, which greatly pleaſed me, and I doubt not, will be entertaining to my friend, as it is written in the ſtile and manner of his favourite author *Hervey*, and contains ſentiments worthy the regard of a man and chriſtian. The time it refers to, being late of a Summer's evening, the author introduces it with thoſe elegant lines from Pope's Homer.

The

. . . The moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er Heav'n's clear azure, ſheds her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole.

"AMONG all the ſtudies that engage the mind of man, the beſt adapted to nature, is that of *Omnipotence*; * this is a field ſufficiently large for the moſt fertile genius to expand its faculties in, and affords a ſerious contemplation to learn its own weakneſs, and to adore that Almighty Being, who ſpoke the whole into exiſtence, and ſtill ſupports it by the breath of his mouth.

THE other evening, when the laſt beams of departing day had tinged the fleecy clouds with glowing purple, I left the ſcenes of mirth and jollity, to enjoy the calmneſs of the air, and meditate on the wonders of Creation. The moon adorned the chambers of the Eaſt, and drew a ſilver mantle over the verdant carpet of nature.

Not

* The Omnipotence of GOD, conſidered as one of the Attributes eſſential to Deity, may afford ample matter for adoration, love, confidence, and praiſe, to the *real* Chriſtian, while it muſt inevitably ſerve to fill the *unbeliever*, with conſternation and confuſion of face,

Not the leaſt noiſe diſturbed the ſolemnity of the ſcene; the feathered ſongſters of the grove were retired to reſt, and the herds and flocks were ſleeping on the graſſy ſurface of the meadows.

In this ſilent and pleaſing ſituation, I directed my eyes towards the azure arch of Heaven, viewed with wonder and admiration the grand theatre of the Univerſe, and wandered in idea through the boundleſs fields of Ether. I particularly remarked ſome of the planetary globes, which form our ſolar ſyſtem, now ſhining with diſtinguiſhed luſtre, and reflected on the amazing velocity with which they perform their reſpective orbits round the ſun.*

Retire into yourſelves, ye giddy mortals, think on your own weakneſs, ignorance, and folly, and you will ſoon be convinced how unable ye are to oppoſe the hand that formed univerſal Nature, or contend with that Wiſdom that plann'd its various laws; remember your actions are all expoſed to his view, nor are the moſt ſecret thoughts of

* The works of Creation ſurvey'd with ſerioufneſs and attention, cannot but evidence not only the being, but the wiſdom, Providence, Goodneſs, and Omnipotence of God.

of your hearts concealed from his all-ſearching eye; the pitchy mantle of the night cannot hide any thing from him: tremble, therefore, ye ſcoffers at Providence, ye ſons of rapine, riot, violence, and wrong; be aſſured he marks every action of your lives, and will reward ye at laſt according to your doings. Vengeance, terrible as the duſty whirlwinds of the Arabian deſarts, and ſudden as the lightning's flaſh, will overtake you, and pour on your heads the juſt indignation of an offended GOD.

LEAVE then the purſuits of injuſtice, debauchery and profaneneſs, abandon the haunts of drunkenneſs and ſenſuality, and retire with me into the ſequeſtered fields; contemplate the works of Heaven's Almighty, and you will be ſoon led to adore the Omnipotent Architect, and be convinced that happineſs is only to be found in the paths of virtue and religion."*

AN

* I have tried what delights are to be found in madneſs and folly, and am now in purſuit of what *wiſdom* and *philoſophy* can yield. In the fair *Creation*, I trace an Almighty power, and ſee the immenſe Divinity impreſt on all his works. *Mrs. Rowe's Letters.*

An early epiſtle, with your opinion of the incloſed, will much oblige an old friend in the receſſes of Sylvan Tranquility.

Ryegate,
Auguſt 28. Your's &c.

LETTER XXIII.

From Miſs M. to a relation, informing her how happy ſhe is in her rural ſituation; with an allegorical viſion, ſhewing the benefits of adverſity.

It may appear very odd to my dear Sophronia, that a young woman at my time of life, ſhould prefer ſolitude and retirement, before gaiety and the diverſions of the town, and though ſurrounded with pleaſures and amuſements, ſhould willingly abandon them all, and declare myſelf in favour of the country; but really they appeared to me ſo trifling and inſipid, that I was quite tired of them; there was ſuch a ſameneſs in moſt, and vanity in every ſcene daily preſented to my view, that nothing but my couſin's obliging importunities could have prevailed on me to follow them ſo long.

Her

HER company and converſation were the greateſt happineſs I enjoyed in London; with her I paſt whole hours in amuſing and inſtructive intercourſe, and experienced more real and inward ſatisfaction from the pleaſing marks of her friendſhip and eſteem I continually received, than I poſſibly could do, from ſparkling at Vauxhall, or in the crouded rounds of Ranelagh. Her conſtant endeavours to entertain me by making parties of pleaſure, and going to different places of public amuſements, whilſt they afforded me ſufficient opportunities of making proper reflections on each, at the ſame time convinced me of her deſire and willingneſs, to make my ſtay in town as agreeable as ſhe could. How happy ſhould I have thought myſelf, could I have prevailed on her to accompany me into the country, but with what regret I left her behind, my tears at parting evidenced.

I FOUND but one fault with her, which was her ſtrong attachment to pleaſures of a *tumultuous* kind, while mine were more of a retired nature, ariſing from an unconquerable fondneſs of rural ſolitude and ſylvan contemplations, which I can enjoy in my preſent ſituation, unenvied by the great, forſaken by the gay, and undiſturbed by all.

SINCE

SINCE my return to ſilent groves, and ſhady bowers, ſhe has favoured me with an account of a very remarkable dream ſhe had one evening; the effects, ſhe apprehends, of a converſation the day before with a friend, on the benefits of adverſity and diſtreſs; which, as it is peculiarly ſtriking and inſtructive, I cannot ſuppoſe there is any occaſion to apologize for incloſing it

LAST Monday Mrs. R—— called and drank tea with us, when the queſtion was ſtarted by my mother (who was then much troubled with a violent pain in her head) Of what benefit is *adverſity* and wherein can it be ſtiled uſeful to man in general?* At night when I reſigned myſelf to ſleep, Fancy reſumed her office, and impreſt with the above enquiry, tranſported me in a moment into the moſt charming meadow I had ever ſeen. A murmuring ſtream flowed thro' the middle of it, and by its refreſhing moiſture, perpetually renewed it with all the beauties of the ſpring; the verdure of the ground, the gay flowers with which it was enamelled, the fragrance

* This dream was really the production of a young lady, and communicated to the author by a female friend.

grance of the morning air, the ſloping beams of the riſing ſun gilding a thick wood that appeared on one ſide of the meadow, all conſpired to heighten the beauty of the ſcene, and give alacrity to the ſpirits. My heart exulted with joy as I purſued the courſe of the river or ſtream, which led to the temple ſituated at a diſtance on a riſing ground, encircled with woodbines, jeſſamines and myrtles, whoſe variegated bloſſoms caſt forth a profuſion of mingled ſweets. To this temple, moſt travellers who entered the meadow, ſeemed at *firſt* inclined to bend their ſteps, but I obſerved ſcarce any that accompliſhed their purpoſe; growing tired with the ſtraightneſs of the path, they preſently quitted it, to ramble in the winding alleys of the neighbouring wood, which promiſed them greater variety. Some indeed, though but very few, quickly came out again, and followed their firſt intention of going to the temple, while others, penetrating into the thickeſt part of the wood, were ſeen no more.

My curioſity was awakened on ſeeing ſuch numbers croud the avenues, to enquire where thoſe ſeveral paths terminated; and perceiving a perſon of a grave and ſtudious aſpect, whoſe eyes were fixt on the multitudes before him, as if contemplating with a ſteady attention, their various manners,

ners, ways, and ends; I applied myſelf to him for information. At firſt he put me off with a ſlight anſwer, but on my repeating the queſtion with an earneſt ſolicitude, he ſmoothed his contracted brow, put on a more familiar and inviting air, told me his name was *Knowledge*, and offered to be my guide. I readily accepted him, and he addreſt me with theſe words,

"You ſee before you the meadow of *Truth*, "whoſe lively verdure never decays, being con- "ſtantly watered by the river of *Wiſdom*; if "you follow its courſe it will lead you to the "temple of *Virtue*, through which you ſhall ar- "rive at that of perfect felicity; but though it "is a path of peace, and all its ways are plea- "ſantneſs, how eaſily is it quitted for the ſake "of wandering in the wood of *Error!* enticed by "a view of its ſhady ſerpentine walks, and vainly "imagining they can find a way out whenever "they pleaſe, they boldly enter, (fatal delu- "ſion!) and involving themſelves in its intri- "cate labyrinths, are loſt forever. But let us "go nearer, and take a view of its principal "avenues."

As we approached the entrance, my guide bid me take notice of a peaſant who was very buſy in offering to conduct the travellers through the wood; "See (ſaid he) how readily they yield "themſelves

" themſelves to the guidance of *Ignorance*, whoſe " appearance has nothing to invite their atten- " tion; for his habit, his air, and his features, " ſpeak the clown; yet ſuch is the indolence of " mankind, that they will accept the firſt conduc- " tor who offers his ſervice, rather than be at the " pains to obtain a proper one; but they ſeverely " ſuffer for their negligence, for obſerve to what " dangers he expoſes them; impoſed on by his " falſe directions, look what a thorny path that " company is walking in, each endeavouring to " outſtrip his companion, in hopes of obtain- " ing the promiſed ends of their labours, titles, " honours, and ſplendid diſtinctions; for this " he has told them, is the path of *Ambition:* but " alas! what toil attends their ſteps? a cruel " hag ſtiled *Envy*, is perpetually haunting them, " they cannot fly from her, and ſhe ſcarcely " ever permits them to reſt; the farther they " advance, the thicker the briars ſhoot up, " and their reward is generally diſappointment " and vexation of ſpirit. A little farther in that " narrow alley, you perceive a troop who walk " with their eyes fixt upon the ground, and pro- " ceed with the moſt wary and cautious ſteps; " they are in the purſuit of *Riches*, their way " is full of ſnares, *Care* is their conſtant com- " panion, and ſhould they find the golden mine

" they

" they are ſearching after, 'tis in the midſt of " ſo dreary a wilderneſs, and they have wandered " ſo far from the meadow of *Truth* and the river " of *Wiſdom*, that they will never be able truly " to enjoy it.

But do I not ſee, ſaid I, addreſſing my guide, one path to which *Ignorance* is leading thoſe youths, which reſembles the beauty of the meadow? 'Tis covered with turf and enamelled with flowers, the air is perfumed with their mellifluent odours, a chryſtal ſpring murmurs as it flows o'er the glittering pebbles, the ear is enchanted with the pleaſing harmony of the birds, who warble their melodious notes from every buſh; it appears to me the ſmiling path of *Pleaſure*, which captivates at firſt the young and gay, but is attended with temptations as fatal as they are numerous! " 'Tis true, reply'd my conductor, " that is the path of *Pleaſure*; its beginning is " ſmooth, delightful, and enſnaring, eſpecially to " youth, but its end is certain deſtruction; joy " and feſtivity quickly forſake its followers, and " in their room they are haunted by *Poverty*, " *Diſeaſe*, *Reproach* and *Deſpair*, that even death " itſelf is a welcome relief from ſo many diſ- " ſtreſſing ills."

Terrified

TERRIFIED with this view of the numerous evils that beſet every path in that dangerous wood, I exclaimed, Oh! wretched travellers, to what miſeries are you expoſed! is there no friendly monitor to warn you of the ſnares into which ignorance and love of pleaſure are leading you! "There is one, replied my conductor, that both "admoniſhes and corrects them; if they would "hear and attend to her inſtructions, ſhe would "lead them back to the way they have forſaken: "Though her countenance is ſevere and her "manners unpoliſhed, her councils are dictated "by prudence, and there is not a more faithful "adviſer than *Adverſity*; for man, though capable of knowing what is good for him, is too "fickle and inconſtant to purſue it, too impatient "to bear the ſlow guidance of *Knowledge*, too variable to reliſh the uniformity of *Truth*, and "perſevere in the ſtrait road that leads to *Virtue*; "thus he exchanges *Knowledge* for *Ignorance*, "leaves *Truth* for *Error*, and will aſſuredly reap "Miſery inſtead of Happineſs, if the rod of *Adverſity* does not chaſtiſe the folly that is bound "up in his heart."—As we turned from the wood to proceed to the temple, I awoke, repeating theſe words, "*Adverſity* may often teach us

true Wiſdom, and lead us to attend to the dictates of Providence.*

I WILL not make any remarks on the above at preſent, but leave it to your private meditation; and am, with the greateſt ſincerity, my dear Sophronia,

Taunton, Sep. 3. Your's, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

From a gentleman to his ſiſter, giving an account of the melancholy death of his wife, through the hard treatment of her relations; a true ſtory.

TO you I know I may unboſom myſelf without reſerve; pity me, Oh! my ſiſter, who, from being in the height of connubial felicity, am ſunk in a few minutes into the depths of human diſtreſs. Yeſterday evening I anticipated the dreadful ſtorm, which I'm now mourning the fatal effects of, with all the grief of

* Adverſity or affliction, by humbling us before GOD, may lead us (under the ſanctifying influences of his Spirit) to true penitence for ſin, and a willing ſubmiſſion to all his divine diſpenſations.

of a once loving huſband, but now hapleſs and forlorn widower. Forgive me keeping you in ſuſpence ſo long; but Oh! with what words ſhall I relate the melancholy ſtory, or deſcribe the affecting ſcene this morning preſented to my view. However the world may ſtile it a weakneſs and puſillanimity in a man to ſhed tears, I cannot help, on the preſent occaſion, unmanning myſelf ſo far, and ſhould think it an unfeeling ſtoiciſm, derogatory to human nature, if I did not.

You know I married my dear Cephiſa againſt the conſent of her parents, who were averſe to the match on account of a former diſagreement between them and my relations, about ſome land that they held contiguous to their eſtate in —— ſhire. Both of us undoubtedly could not but think it hard, and rather cruel, that a thing in itſelf a trifle, and ſo long paſt, ſhould be made a bar to our marriage, eſpecially when we knew, neither ſhe nor I occaſioned, or could prevent it; however, ſo it was, and Cephiſa would not have given me her hand, had not her father and mother, by ſeeming at *firſt* to approve of me, induced her to hope they would in a little time be reconciled; for they permitted me to viſit her

without the leaſt hesitation, till I aſked them concerning the fortune they deſigned to give her, when they ſeemed quite ſurprized at the queſtion, and after a long heſitation brought the above objection as a reaſon why their daughter ſhould not marry me. It was now too late, her affections were fixt, as ſhe then declared, and her happineſs as well as mine, wholly depended on our union to each other.

EVER ſince we came together, it has been our conſtant ſtudy and endeavour to regain their eſteem, and we flattered ourſelves with the pleaſing thought, that when they found we lived in perfect harmony and love, they would receive us into their favour, and grant us a ſhare in their parental affections. The letters we both ſent them, entreating their regard in the moſt reſpectful and humiliating terms, have been always anſwered with coolneſs and indifference; but that which we received laſt night, was penn'd in ſuch a harſh and angry ſtile as could not but give each of us great concern in the peruſal of it; one expreſſion eſpecially, that, "*Suppoſing a ſingle penny could ſave our lives, they would not give it.*" As it happened my wife was not preſent when it came, and I (after reading

reading the contents) thought it moſt prudent not to let her ſee it; accordingly, I was juſt going to burn it, when ſhe entered the room haſtily (having heard there was a letter for her in the parlour) and ſeeing it in my hand, aſked me to ſhew it her; but I refuſed, telling her it was too long to read that night, but ſhe ſhould have it in the morning, as ſoon as ſhe pleaſed; (this I ſaid, hoping to have an opportunity of deſtroying it before then) I put it into my pocket, and nothing more being ſaid about it, imprudently went to bed and forgot it; next morning, being impatient to read it, ſhe took it out privately, while I was aſleep (fatal curioſity!) and what followed I hardly know how to reveal.

She got up, went into the nurſery, and took both her children into her arms, ſhedding a flood of tears over them, and kiſt each of them ſeveral times, repeating theſe words, "God bleſs you "both my *dear* little innocents; I hope your "dear father will take care of you for *my* ſake." then turning to the maid, who was quite at a loſs to know the reaſon of her ſtrange unaccountable behaviour, deſired her to go and tell me, ſhe

ſhould not come down to breakfaſt, being taken ill with a violent pain in her head.

WHEN the maid returned to the room, ſhe found the door locked, and knocking at it ſeveral times without having any anſwer, came to me in a great hurry to inform me of it. I went immediately, and breaking open the door, found her laying on the floor, weltering in her blood, flowing from a wound in her throat, which on examination, was cut too deep to cure. The letter above-mentioned lay open on the table, with theſe words written at the bottom of it with a pencil; "My "dear and worthy H——, farewell; I loved "you, and am certain was beloved by you, but "my parents *hate* me: this thought diſtracts "me; farewell—forever,"

MY little boy was ſtroaking her face, and crying "Poor mamma," with tears trickling down his tender cheeks, when I went up to her. I ſent for a ſurgeon, but he told me it was impoſſible to be of any ſervice. What will her hardened and unnatural parents have to anſwer for? I cannot proceed, my grief and confuſion prevent my adding more at preſent, than that I am truly your affectionate,

But deeply afflicted Brother.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

From Camillus to Albanes, with an account of the death of an intimate friend, and a remarkable dream he had relative thereto, incloſed in an elegiac poem on his deceaſe.

Sir,

YOUR deſiring a copy of the elegy on my learned and valuable friend, Dr. Scott,* is a ſufficient warrant for my troubling you with this, without making any apology for ſo doing.

I am, Sir,

Aylſham,
May 14.

Your's, &c.

CAMILLUS.

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* The author was intimately acquainted with Dr. Scott, and had the relation of the enſuing dream from himſelf, which the doctor at the ſame time informed him, he had noticed down in his bible, and it was accordingly found there after his deceaſe.

Dull ſleep inſtructs, nor ſport vain dreams in *vain*,
Night viſions may befriend . . . . . .
Our *waking* dreams are fatal. *Dr. Young.*

AN

ELEGIAC POEM,

On the DEATH of the late pious and learned

JOSEPH NICOLL SCOTT, M. D.

Inſcribed to his diſconſolate WIDOW, by a SYMPATHIZING FRIEND.*

The Time Midnight.

NOCTURNAL darkneſs hides each pleaſing view,
And covers nature with her ſolemn pall;
The hinds no more their rural toils purſue,
But o'er the meads the black'ning ſhadows fall.
Now mimic fancy takes her nightly reign,
(While airy ſongſters reſt on every ſpray)
And draws freſh terrors in the ſickly brain,
Or paints anew the labours of the day.
'Twas at this awful hour, when ſilence keeps
Her dreary ſtation thro' the midnight air;
And wearied induſtry ſecurely ſleeps,
(While diſtant fields a ſable aſpect wear)

* Tho' father, mother, huſband, wife or child,
Or thoſe whom friendſhip's tender ties unite,
Sink in the clay cold grave; be reconcil'd,
Bow to the ſtroke, and ſay of all, *'Tis right.*

A dread

A dreadful viſion broke thy wonted reſt,
Oh SCOTT! for piety and learning fam'd;
A chilling horror ſeiz'd thy troubled breaſt,
While ſudden ſtarts ſome ſecret woe proclaim'd,
When by permiſſion, for thy greateſt good,
A form angelic, from the realms on high;
Ghaſtly appearance! in thy chamber ſtood,
And ſaid, in diſmal accents; "*Thou muſt die.*"
Struck with the meſſage, tho' devoid of ſenſe,
Anxious to know the fatal time, how near;
Amaz'd and trembling in a dread ſuſpenſe,
Thou aſk'd it when? it anſwer'd, "*This day year.*"
Then diſappear'd, Such was thy dream; how true,*
Let weeping Martha ſay, ſhe beſt can tell,
Whoſe faded cheeks continual tears bedew,
Whoſe heaving boſom ſighs unnumber'd ſwell.

SAY Thou, the widowed partner of his heart,
(To whom his mem'ry will be ever dear,
Who in his troubles bore a willing part,
Whoſe death foretold, was all thou had'ſt to fear)
How great thy anguiſh when the foll'wing day,
He told his dream, in vain from thee conceal'd;

* The Author would not recommend a *ſcrupulous* attention to, or an *entire* diſregard of dreams, for GOD ſpeaketh to man in ſleep, in ſlumberings on his bed, then he openeth his ears and cauſeth him to receive inſtruction. If dreams excite us to think ſeriouſly on the moſt intereſting ſubjects of religion, they are to be accounted bleſſings, and attended to with gratitude and praiſe.

And kindly ſtrove to chace thy fears away,
Or idly wiſh'd the viſion unreveal'd.
Say, thou diſconſolate ſurviving Fair,
(Who thought his life more precious than thine own)
What with thy heart-felt ſorrows can compare,
For oh! thy much-lov'd dearer ſelf is gone.
What ſtrange foreboding doubts oppreſt thy mind,
While months roll'd on not unobſerv'd by thee,
And every week which ſtill remain'd behind,
Did but increaſe thy ſad anxiety.
'Till lo! the time arriv'd, and prov'd too true,
Which greatly heighten'd every ſorrow paſt;
For tho' in ſeeming health, ſuch pains enſue,
As verify the dream and prove his laſt.*
Methinks I ſee him on the verge of life,
O'erwhelm'd with grief to heav'n for mercy call,
"LORD! with thy choiceſt bleſſings crown my wife,
"My only joy, my comfort, and my all.
"Pardon my ſins, O GOD; I know thou wilt,
"For 'tis thy gracious and benign decree,
"*I will forgive repenting ſinners' guilt,*
'*And ſave the weakeſt ſoul who truſts in me.*
"Oh! make poor Martha's life thy conſtant care,
"To her thy ſweeteſt conſolations give;

* He was taken with a violent ſickneſs, accompanied with ſymptoms of a lethargy, on that day year he had this remarkable dream, Wedneſday the 20th of December 1769, and died the Saturday following.

"May

" May ſhe forever in thy goodneſs ſhare,
" For whoſe dear ſake *alone* I wiſh to live.
" In deep diſtreſs, whenever danger's nigh,
" Be thou the watchful guardian of my love;
" Protect thro' life, and when ſhe comes to die,
" Grant we may meet to part no more above."
What inward anguiſh did his looks betray,
When in the agonies of death, he cried,
We now muſt part! then juſt was heard to ſay,
Preſſing thy hand, *farewell*, *farewell*, and died.

BEWAILING friends, a melancholy train,
Attend his funeral to the diſtant grave;
While thou art left in ſilence to complain,
To joy a ſtranger, and to grief a ſlave.
But, gentle mourner, wipe thy ſtreaming eyes,
For know, he's gone to realms of laſting peace,
While GOD, the widow's refuge, *never* dies,
He reigns above tho' all relations ceaſe.

IN pity, Heav'n, behold a widow's grief,
And on her head unnumber'd mercies pour;
In every trouble, be her ſure relief,
And endleſs portion when this life is oe'r.

BY retroſpection, life a *dream* appears,
And our paſt moments but a tranſient ſpan;

Short

Short is the ſpace of even numerous years,
While frequent fun'rals ſhew how frail is man.
Our days by heav'n appointed, are but few,
Our time's uncertain, tho' our end is ſure,
Experience proves the obſervation true,
In young and old, the affluent and the poor.
All things around us intimate decay,
Unknown misfortunes all our ſteps attend;
Deaths ſtand like *mercurys* in every way,
And kindly point us to our journey's end.

His EPITAPH.

WITHIN this dreary vault in ſilence lies
A tender huſband and a friend ſincere;
Whoſe healing aid remov'd our painful cries,*
A loſs ſo great at leaſt deſerves a tear.

Tho' health, oh youth! may now thy ſteps attend,
And pleaſures court, while time unheeded flies,
And thou may'ſt live unmindful of thine end,
Hear with attention what the grave replies:

REFLECT, preſumpt'ous man, how ſhort thy ſpace,
How few thy moments, and how quick they fly;
The preſent time, the fleeting hours embrace,
For ere another morning *thou* may'ſt die.

LET-

* This refers to his profeſſion as a phyſician.

LETTER XXV.

From Theron to Altamont, deſcribing his ſituation; with his reflections in one of his evening walks, concluding with a quotation from Addiſon's Cato.

I AM now ſit down with a deſign to fulfil my engagement to my dear friend, in writing to him the firſt opportunity, a deſcription of my preſent ſituation, which, I doubt not you will accept with pleaſure, as a token of that friendſhip and eſteem I have ever profeſt, and would always endeavour to evidence I retain for one, ſo well deſerving univerſal regard as yourſelf. But no more on this head, or you will ſay I flatter; therefore to proceed.

My brother's ſeat, where I now am, is about half a mile from the high road to Oxford, and two miles on this ſide that delightful city, ſurrounded with woods, lawns, groves, and flowery meads; in the front of it is a fine level green, in the middle of which is a circular baſon, with a fountain of curious workmanſhip. A large and noble pair of iron gates, with a row of palliſadoes, ſecure the green from the inroads of heedleſs

leſs travellers; oppoſite the gates is a long gravel walk, ſhaded by elms, growing in rows on each ſide, and terminated by a wide and extenſive common, over which you have a beautiful proſpect of the diſtant country, almoſt unbounded. On the left ſide of the walk, appears one of a ſerpentine form, ſhaded in the ſame manner, which leads to the church, and is reckoned above a mile in length, with verdant fields on one hand, and the common on the other, but ſeparated from it by an elegant fence of Chineſe railing. Here I often repair of an evening, with Thompſon's Seaſons, or ſome other entertaining Author, and while I read, am ſweetly ſerenaded by the warblers of the groves from the o'er-ſhadowing branches.

On the right ſide of the walk is a grove, through which runs a tranſparent murmuring ſtream, and leads to a hermit's cave at the further end of it, where a ſkull and an hour-glaſs, on an old-faſhionable table, intimate how well the place is ſuited for the moſt ſolemn meditations.

Behind the houſe, are the gardens, which are laid out in a rural and groteſque manner; in one part

part is a large and elegant ſummer-houſe, through which a door opens into a beautiful grotto; here a cold bath is made, ſurrounded with blue and white marble. At the extremity of the garden is a long and ſpacious canal, with a fine pleaſure boat, where, in calm and pleaſant weather, we drink tea of an afternoon; the flower enamelled meadows, with the herds and flocks on the borders of the ſtream, render the ſcene truly pleaſant and agreeable.

WALKING one evening by the ſide of this noble piece of water, my thoughts were employed on the beauties of the creation, diſplayed in every part of the variegated landſkip preſented to my view. How, ſaid I, can man ſufficiently admire and adore the wiſdom that planned the amazing ſcheme, and the hand that formed the heavens and earth! Let the Atheiſt, who denies the being of his all-wiſe Creator, look to the flowers in yonder mead, the graſs in yonder field, and the birds on every bough, twittering their evening ſongs to the Supreme Author of univerſal nature, and with the deepeſt proſtration confeſs his folly, and own a GOD; let him joyfully adopt that fine ſoliloquy in *Cato*.

. . . . . If there's a Power above me?
(And that there is, all Nature ſpeaks aloud
Thro' all her works) he muſt delight in *virtue*,
And that which *he* delights in muſt be *happy*.

I WILL not detain you longer on a ſubject, which has ſo often employed much abler pens than mine, but leave it to infinite Wiſdom to make himſelf known (in his own time, which muſt be the beſt) to all whom he ſhall think fit; in the mean while, may it be your and my happineſs, to be led by every temporal ſpring, to the great eternal fountain of all, is the earneſt deſire of,

Dear Friend,

Your's &c.

July 10. THERON.

LETTER XXVII.

A picture of rural felicity, or ſolitude ſuitably improved; in a letter from a gentleman retired from buſineſs, to his friend in town; an extract.

DEAR FRIEND,

BEFORE I withdrew from the vain world, I had my apprehenſions, I confeſs, leſt an exceſs of ſolitude, after much buſtle, might drive me

me back again to care and commerce; but I found my deficiencies of moral wiſdom too great, not to riſque ſome preſent conveniences to retrieve it. I thought with that ſweet poet Mr. Thompſon, I could not go where univerſal love reigned not around; and beſides I had a notion of a *conſtitutional* as well as a *moral* rational happineſs, and reſolved to truſt ſomething to it.

The little land I came poſſeſſed of, by the death of my couſin, had been long neglected, and I found the diſpoſitions of the poor ruſtics about me, in little better ſituation. I determined to cultivate both to the utmoſt of my power, by the ſweat of my brow, and the maxims of my mind. An early attention to botany gives me a ſmattering knowledge of the virtues of ſimples, and this ſtudy I daily employ in the ſervice of humanity; nor is *divinity*, my delightful meditation, forgot to be applied where it is wanted.

The old ſhepherd reclines his grey head upon his crook, and bleſſes me for the truths that I teach him; and when the oxen are releaſed from the team, even the ruſtick ploughboy ſeeks for my inſtruction. When little differences ariſe, I arbitrate between the parties, and in every difficulty

or

or doubt, am applied to as a counſellor and a friend. The poor man divides my little loaf with me, and the fainting traveller reſts him at my porch, and rejoices over the fruit of my vintage.

My little income is ſufficient for the utmoſt wiſhes of my heart, and enables me to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the neceſſities of patient merit, and make the whole hamlet ſmile around me. My ſon chearfully aſſiſts in theſe duties; he carries the medicines to the ſick, and divides the burthen with the weary. The ſmall knowledge of books I allow him, gives him a conſequence for his learning, and he employs the little influence he thus acquires, with great judgment and diſcretion, I tell him a fur gown or gold chain can never exalt a man intrinſically, nor the loweſt offices of humanity degrade him. "When you ſee the aged, my ſon, ſtooping un-
"der their bundle of dry ſticks, ſee that you lay
"the faggot at their door; and if the proud man
"condemns your education, pity and paſs him
"by."

My dear and affectionate daughter ſupplies to me in great meaſure, the loſs I have ſuſtained in her

her dear mother; ſhe amply rewards my tender care of her infancy, by a diligence of duty I cannot deſcribe to you. The conduct of my little family is hers; her œconomy at home enables her to be liberal abroad; and ſhe loves all my leſſons and piouſly purſues them. When the buſineſs of the field or the neceſſities of our neighbours, keep my ſon and I longer abſent than uſual, the ſweet ſmile of affectionate complacency welcomes our return; the decent table is prepared, the chearful blaze provided, and the harmony of the evening begins.

In one corner of my garden is a lonely peaceful hermitage, made up of roots, and decorated with ſome ſtriking mementoes of mortality, here in my chearfulleſt moments I retire, to meditate on the ſublime truths of religion, converſe with the preaching dead, and ſay to the worm, *Thou art my ſiſter*; here I think of the conquerors who have dropt their truncheons in the cold grave, of wits who are for ever ſilent, and of beauties who have reſigned their graces. They teach me what I am, and what I ſoon muſt be; and I thank death for preaching ſo profoundly.

You will never more, I am perſwaded, invite me to London. Here my affections are engaged, here

here my reaſon is ſatisfied, and here I ſhall lay my aſhes. A plain and peaceful ſtone ſhall one day cover my remains, and no pride of epitaph ſhall draw the traveller to gaze at it. The villagers perhaps for ſome few years may tell how much I loved them; but all things, ſooner or later, are forgotten. I am,

Matlock, Derbyſhire,
July 18.

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

From Ruſticos to Clitander, deſcribing a ſummer-houſe belonging to his friend Philenus, with reflections on a morning's walk, concluding with an account of the melancholy end of Miſs L. a young lady of beauty and merit.

DEAR CLITANDER,

I AM now retired into the ſtudy of my valuable friend Philenus, to anſwer your obliging letter. My preſent ſituation is quite agreeable to my ſolitary diſpoſition, and invites me to ſerious reflection.

AT

AT the bottom of a long gravel walk, ſhaded on each ſide with lofty elms, my friend has built a ſummer houſe, the upper part of which is his ſtudy; oppoſite to the door, on a ſort of ſhelf, is placed an hour-glaſs, and by the ſide of it a mirror, with a death's head on the top of it, underneath is written in large characters, *Vide et noſce teipſum, tempus fugit* *; intimating the ſhortneſs of time, and vanity of man in his beſt eſtate, or that the knowledge of one's-ſelf is the greateſt wiſdom. From the windows, verdant fields, glittering ſtreams, luxuriant meadows, and hanging woods preſent the eye with a truly rural landſcape, bounded only by the horizon.

On the left, at a little diſtance, the church is ſeen, which appears an old gothic building, adorned with a lofty ſpire, the work of hands ages ago mouldered into duſt. On the right a few lowly cottages, the dwellings of labouring ſwains, ſcattered here and there, with flocks and herds feeding in the adjoining meads, add to the ſimplicity of the Sylvan ſcene. Near the above emblematical device, in an elegant book-caſe, is a well choſen collection of authors, chiefly

* See and know thyſelf, time flies away.

chiefly on religious ſubjects; by the ſide of it, a writing deſk, and round the room ſeveral inſtructive and entertaining pictures, leading the ſpectator to the moſt intereſting events in hiſtory, or repreſenting the beauties of the diſtant country; here, ſecluded from the noiſe and hurry of the buſy town, nothing appears to divert my attention or engage my thoughts, but what at the ſame time tends to calm and compoſe my mind, and fix it on objects heavenly and divine, At preſent, as the poet deſcribes it.

The ſun, with fervid beams,
O'er meadows, hills and ſtreams,
Shines thro' the noon-tide hours;
As beauteous charms decay
(Of ſore diſtreſs the prey,)
So fade the drooping flowers;
While flocks and herds,
With warbling birds,
To ſome thick ſhades repair,
A cool retreat,
From ſultry heat,
Which now invades the air.

Welcome Solitude, which leaves me to enjoy my own reflections without diſturbance, and affords me an opportunity, while Philenus is unavoidably engaged abroad, to correſpond with my dear Clitander.

I took

I took a walk this morning in the neighbouring fields, before the dews were exhaled by the increasing heat; a walk, by the side of flowery hedges, whose blossoms, while they pleased my eye with their variegated colours, regaled my senses with the most delicious fragrance. The morning was pleasant, the air serene, and the heavens unclouded. As I past along, I could not help reflecting on the ingratitude too many are guilty of, to their beneficent Creator for the mercies they enjoy, as numerous as they are unmerited.

HEALTH, the greatest of earthly blessings; wealth, that useful attendant upon man, though (it may be) granted in a rich abundance, how little noticed or acknowledged by the world in general, or individuals in particular. It is commonly observed, a thing not worth asking for, is not worth having; it may as well be said, a blessing not deserving our thankfulness and acknowledgment, is not worth our enjoying; but where is there such a one? Indeed, where is there the least of the Almighty's gifts to his creatures, which does not merit their highest gratitude, and call for their daily praise? Surely 'tis our duty to

own

own our obligations to heaven even for our *exiſtence*, much more for thoſe favours which make it comfortable and happy.

I AM ſorry to find your ſon turns out ſo indifferent; I am well perſuaded 'tis not for want of the beſt example and inſtructions, but through a proneneſs in youth to follow pleaſures and amuſements, ſuited to their gay and thoughtleſs inclinations; yet, give not up your hope concerning him, he may be reclaimed in time, be led to ſee his folly and undutifulneſs, and convinced of his error, repent and reform before it is too late; an over-ruling Providence may graciouſly interpoſe, and bring him to a ſight and ſenſe of his evil doings and make him a comfort to you, and a growing bleſſing to all around; I ſincerely wiſh he may.

No one is without his troubles of one kind or another; I received yeſterday, the following melancholy account of that late amiable young lady, Miſs L——, which, I dare ſay, you have not been informed of, as it was kept as ſecret as poſſible by her relations, and only communicated to me by Mr.———, who is very intimate in the family.

LAST

LAST winter Miſs L—— was upon a viſit to Mrs. Alfred, her aunt in town, and going to the different public places of iverſion, was greatly admired for her beauty (to be ſure ſhe was a fine figure.) Among the reſt who fixed their eyes on her was Mr. R——, a gay genteel young fellow, who, being acquainted with her aunt, eaſily got introduced into her company, and often made one of the party to attend her and Mrs. Alfred to the ſeveral amuſements in vogue. In a few weeks, Miſs L—— appeared prejudiced in his favour, and never ſeemed ſo chearful and happy as when he was preſent. Mr. R. obſerved her attachment to him with much pleaſure, and continued more and more every day endeavouring to ingratiate himſelf into her eſteem; he ſoon ſucceeded to the beſt of his wiſhes, and made an open confeſſion of his paſſion to her: ſhe received it with apparent ſatisfaction, but referred him to her aunt for permiſſion to viſit her as a lover*. Mrs. Alfred, upon his mentioning it, told him ſhe could not ſay any thing to it till ſhe had wrote

* If every young lady would act in this prudent manner, whenever they are *firſt* addreſſed by young fellows, they would not have ſo many difficulties to ſtruggle with as they often find in ſimilar caſes.

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to Mr. L.——, the young lady's father, which ſhe promiſed to do the firſt opportunity; in the mean time, ſhe took care they ſhould never be alone together.

THE very day ſhe ſent the letter, ſhe received one from Mr. L——, deſiring his daughter might return immediately, as her eldeſt ſiſter was extremely ill, and given over by the phyſicians. Miſs L—— received the news with great trouble, not only on account of her ſiſter's illneſs, but being obliged to leave London, and forced from the man who had gained her heart. Their parting was a ſcene too pathetick to deſcribe; after telling him her direction, and ſhedding a flood of tears, ſhe ſet off for her father's ſeat in Devonſhire. Her arrival there, and meeting her ſorrowful relations juſt as her ſiſter died, was truly affecting; in ſhort, it threw her into a melancholy. Her friends obſerved it, and endeavoured all they could to divert her, but ſomething ſeemed to hang heavy on her ſpirits, too heavy to be removed, which ſhe would not diſcover. However, one morning they went to call her to breakfaſt, and found ſhe was gone out, nobody knew where, unleſs it was in the garden; diligent ſearch was made for her to no purpoſe 'till the next day, when ſhe

was

was taken up drowned in a canal near Mr. R——'s houſe. In looking over her papers, a letter was found in her bureau from an acquaintance in town informing her Mr. R——— was killed in a duel: and the laſt words he ſaid, were, "Oh dear, but abſent Maria, could I have ſeen "you once more, I ſhould have died in peace. "Farewell—forever." At the bottom of the letter ſhe had written the following lines:

TOO lovely youth, by all around approv'd,
By all lamented, as by all belov'd,
Why didſt thou raſhly thus thy life expoſe,
And load Maria with unnumber'd woes?
Fain would Religion lend her aid divine,
While anxious friends their feeble efforts join,
To raiſe my ſpirits and divert my grief,
But all in vain; there's none can give relief.

Heav'n only knows what ſorrows tore my heart,
In that ſad hour when we were forced to part;
But, oh! what tongue could half my anguiſh tell,
When in th' above I read thy laſt farewell?
'Twas for *thy* ſake I wiſh'd to live, alone;
Now thou art dead, my life's a burthen grown:
Dear youth farewell, earth has no joys for me,
I cannot live without, I'll therefore die with thee.

HER family is truly a ſcene of confuſion and diſtreſs, and really much to be pitied. Theſe raſh reſolutions and violent effects of a juvenile paſſion, I cannot but ſay, appear to me, not only the greateſt weakneſs, but a flying in the face of Heaven, and may juſtly expect to be rewarded with eternal vengeance.*

PASSIONS are to be regulated by reaſon, and over-awed by the dictates of religion, or for what could our reaſoning powers and faculties be given us? I know very few men now, wiſh to perſuade themſelves their appetites were given them for any other purpoſe than to be ſatisfied, even at the expence of their health, fortune and reputation; but Providence has appointed lawful methods and inſtitutions for the ſober and prudent gratifications of them, as wiſe as they are beneficial both to individuals and the community, which it is the duty as well as higheſt intereſt of all to purſue. I fear you will think this a tedious epiſtle,

* As we cannot *lengthen* our lives we ſhould not attempt to *ſhorten* them, for as death leaves us judgment will find us.

epiſtle, therefore I'll beg your indulgence no longer than while I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your's &c.

Cornwall, Sept. 5, RUSTICUS.

LETTER XXIX.

From Euſebius to Alcoret, demonſtrating the advantages and ſuperiority of a religious life, even ſuppoſing there were no future *ſtate; with a quotation from Ray on the Creation, and Young's Night Thoughts, in defence of his arguments.*

I WAS much ſurprized, on the reading of my dear friend's letter, to find he intimates a doubt concerning the reality of a *future* ſtate, and ſeems to think with indifference on the importance of religion, eſpecially reſpecting the grand doctrine of a life of happineſs or miſery to come. Whatever arguments you may have been furniſhed with by the gay, thoughtleſs, and diſſipated votaries of pleaſure in favour of *annihilation*,

be assured they will not bear a close examination without proving vain, trifling, and a lie.*

" *'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,*
" *And intimates eternity to man.*" Cato.

" Art thou such a clod to wish thyself all clay?
" Nature's first wish is endless happiness;
" Annihilation is an after-thought,
" A monstrous wish, unborn till Virtue dies."
Young.

THE present life is very properly called a state of trial, and well compared to a journey, race, warfare, and shadow that soon passeth away, when contrasted with, and considered as a passage to, or the time of preparing for an eternity to come; without which consideration, the above similies which the Scriptures hold forth, would appear and must be deemed trifling and absurd. But another strong argument for the reality of a future state, may be drawn from the apparent unequal

* Who tells me, he denies his soul immortal,
Whate'er his boast, has told me, *he's a knave*,
Who thinks ere long the man shall *wholly* die,
Is dead already; nought but *brute* survives. *Dr. Young.*

unequal diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments here, as well as the continual thirſt in man for ſome *future* good; above all the declarations of ſacred writ, which, ſpeaking of the righteous and the wicked, ſay, *Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal; as Death leaves them, judgment will find them*; and many more ſimilar ones too numerous too mention in a letter, but well worthy your ſearching after and regard.

VERY few, if any, *really* diſbelieve a future ſtate, but many *wiſh* there were none, or endeavour to perſuade themſelves of it, becauſe ſuppoſing there is no ſuch thing, they ſhall not be called to an account for their actions, which account they may have the greateſt reaſon to dread the thoughts of. But you ſeem to imagine, if there is no hereafter you may live as you liſt, as the common obſervation is, and adopt the language of thoſe who ſaid, "*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*;" a very erroneous and blameworthy method of thinking and acting this, which corrupt nature only can ſuggeſt and encourage.

No, my dear friend, be aſſured from the writings and experience of all ages, that Virtue

is its own reward, and Vice its own puniſhment in the *preſent* life; this we have daily proofs of, eſpecially the *latter*, from the frequent untimely and ignominious ends of the profligate and abandoned. May ſuch repeated warnings and examples of the truth of divine revelation, *The end, of theſe things is death*, make a ſuitable impreſſion on the minds of all, and excite us to *be ſpiritually minded, which is life and peace.*

SHOULD we, for argument's ſake, admit a probability of annihilation, yet a life of piety and virtue will be found the ſafeſt and the beſt, in this caſe, not only as the means of prolonging our exiſtence,* but to procure the enjoyment of peace of mind, chearfulneſs of temper, and in a great meaſure, health and content. In this view, a virtuous life is not only our duty, but beſt *policy* to purſue, as the way to the greateſt happineſs and tranquility that can be enjoyed on earth. Dr. Young very juſtly ſays,

Religion's all.

FOR it enſures us felicity here below, and if there is an eternity (which both reaſon and revelation join

* The Scriptures aſſert, *Wicked men live not half their days.* Pſ. lv. 23

join to enforce) everlaſting joy; there is all in it we can want to make us happy for *both* worlds, on that account 'tis all we ſhould follow and chiefly prize.

THE late biſhop of Cheſter, in a diſcourſe on natural religion, ſpeaking of the advantages ariſing from the belief of a Supreme Being, and living up to ſuch a belief, obſerves: "He that "believes and owns a GOD, if there ſhould be "none, is in no danger of any bad conſequence, "for all the inconvenience of this will be, "that he may be hereby occaſioned to tye him-"ſelf up to ſome needleſs reſtraints during this "ſhort time of his life; wherein notwithſtand-"ing there is, as to the *preſent*, much peace, "quiet, and ſafety; and as to the *future*, his "error ſhall die with him, there being none to "call him to an account for his miſtake." And Mr. Ray, in his Treatiſe on the Wiſdom of GOD in the Creation, quoting the above paſſage, very properly adds, "He not only ſuffers no "damage from the belief of an hereafter, but "reaps a conſiderable benefit from his miſtake, "if there is none; for during this life, he enjoys "a pleaſant dream or fancy of a future bleſſed "ſtate, with the thoughts and expectations

" whereof he ſolaces himſelf, and agreeably en-
" tertains his time; and is in no danger of being
" ever awaked out of it, or convinced of his er-
" ror and folly, death making a full end of him.*"

Excuſe my troubling you with theſe quotations; but, as I am well aſſured I cannot advance any thing more to the purpoſe, and as you may not have met with or obſerved them, permit me to recommend them to your private meditations, as remarks, ſuited in the ſtrongeſt manner to corroborate and ſupport the arguments I have mentioned in the former part of this letter, and to convince you there were perſons, famed for piety, virtue, and the knowledge of men and things, of the ſame opinion with myſelf.

UPON the whole, you may take it for an undeniable fact; and it is my earneſt deſire you may ever experience, Religion is the beſt profeſſion, the Knowledge of GOD and yourſelf the trueſt wiſdom,

* Suppoſing the reality of a *future* ſtate (ſays the pious Mrs. Rowe) to be but a mere fiction, yet the *good* man has this advantage attending his belief of it, that *death* which alone can rob him of his hope concerning *future* happineſs, puts him *forever* out of a capacity of *lamenting* his loſs.

wiſdom, and Temperance the beſt phyſic, or a life of piety and virtue, the ſpring of unſpeakable comfort and happineſs on earth, and a prelude to your inheritance of eternal glory in heaven.

FORGIVE the length of this, and believe me to be with the greateſt ſincerity.

Dear Friend,

Your real well-wiſher for both worlds,

Hartford, June 5. Euſebius.

LETTER XXX.

Tricon's Deſcription of his friend Thymander's romantic retreat, with an adventure of a ſingular kind, reſpecting a female recluſe, or the fair Sobrina; an extract.

DEAR SIR,

THE following adventure, I perſuade myſelf, will afford you no ſmall pleaſure, as it in ſome meaſure elucidates the hiſtory of the pious Sobrina, the young lady you was ſo deſirous of being acquainted with. Not far from

my friend Thymander's country houſe, where I'm at preſent on a viſit, are the remains of an ancient caſtle, part of which he has converted into a beautiful ſeat, leaving the other part in its tottering ſtate, an emblem of the ſure decay of all earthly grandeur.

THIS venerable ruin ſtands retired from the reſt of the place, which every where carries the moſt chearful appearance that can be imagined.

BEHIND a wood of an almoſt impenetrable darkneſs, through which you paſs to a country, an entire contraſt to that you have left, rocky and uncultivated; a ſlight path-way prompts curioſity to go on, though all idea of pleaſure is left behind. Accuſtomed however ſoon, to theſe romantic ſcenes, the mind begins to reliſh them, and a fine old wood, to which you are drawing near ſeems to promiſe a concluſion of this wild ſcene; you are ſcarcely entered into it, when your eyes are ſtruck with this antiquated building, the moſt beautiful I ever ſaw, ſtanding on the fineſt turf, and ſurrounded by trees ſtill more venerable, which the rough hand of time has alſo ſhaken.

THE

THE part which my friend has fitted up, is ſuitable to the reſt of the caſtle, and only ſeems as if one of the apartments was left entire. Here he leaves a ſmall collection of books, with pen, ink and paper, as concluding the mind will naturally incline, in this place of retirement, to *ſtudy* and *contemplation*, and may alſo be induced to commit to paper, ſome of thoſe intereſting ideas which an uninterrupted ſolitude uſually ſuggeſts.

ABOUT this time laſt year, I went down to this gentleman's houſe, to ſpend the *Eaſter* holidays, and uſed to delight in taking a walk daily and ſpending ſome hours in this agreeable receſs, which ſeemed peculiarly calculated for the indulgence of thoſe ſolemn thoughts, that at that ſeaſon, may naturally be ſuppoſed to engroſs the whole man.

FULL of theſe thoughts, I wandered as uſual through the wood to the building, intending to indulge myſelf for an hour or two, in the contemplation of our REDEMPTION.—— I was ſurprized at my entrance, to ſee a young lady, deeply engaged in thought, ſitting by the table. I was going to retire, when finding ſhe had not perceived me, I ventured to ſtay.

THE

THE moſt pleaſing ſerenity, joined with the moſt intenſe meditation, were viſible in her countenance. After ſome time, ſhe took up the pen and wrote: I was in a moſt diſtreſſed ſituation; I feared to retire, leſt I ſhould diſturb her;—though I wiſhed not to interrupt ſo uſeful a ſtudy as her's ſeemed to be, I at laſt attempted to ſteal away; but on my moving, ſhe heard me, and retired with precipitation; at the oppoſite door, in her haſte, ſhe let fall a paper, which an irreſiſtable deſire of knowing the ſubject of her thoughts, prompted me to take up, and I read with unſpeakable pleaſure, the following meditation.

"O my Soul! let us retire a little from the world; let me enter into my cloſet, and ſhut the doors about us; let us conſider what we are and what we muſt be; I know that I am, and I feel I am IMMORTAL.—I know too, for God has told me ſo, that I am to have every bodily infirmity one day removed, and *This mortal put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption.* I believe that I have a CREATOR, a REDEEMER, and a SANCTIFIER; I am not now to conſider whether I believe theſe things, for my heart yields an entire aſſent to every

one

one of them; but my faith may want ſtrengthening, and my practice, quickening; it is therefore neceſſary, and it is alſo delightful, to ſpend ſome little time in attending to truths, which I believe, and in examining how my life correſponds with my faith. Do I believe there is a GOD? Yes; that he is all *mighty*, all *wiſdom*, all *juſtice*, all *knowledge*? Yes; do I therefore think of him, pray to him, love, ſerve, and worſhip him? O my ſoul! theſe things would raiſe me above the world, while I am in it, and make my life eaſy, tranquil, and happy. Do I believe that I am redeemed? Do I believe that my REDEEMER liveth? and that he ſhall ſtand at the laſt day upon the earth, and though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee GOD? Yes; I do believe and tremble; but why tremble? why not rather rejoice and be exceedingly glad, that great is your reward in Heaven; and may I, even I, hope for this reward? I may hope; but it is an unlawful thought, that this depends upon *myſelf*; If *ſincerity*, *perſeverance*, *moderation*, *benevolence*, *piety* and *virtue* attend all my actions, then I am bleſt indeed; let me reſolve on them, and with chearfulneſs perform every thing that will tend to inſure me the great happineſs which is offered

fered me; that GOD in Chriſt may not only be my portion hereafter, but ſmooth the bed of death, calm the awful hour that ſeparates me from my preſent ſtate, and alſo make my continuance on earth as comfortable and chearful, as the variety of this uncertain and chequered world is capable of.

I muſt *die!* and what is death? it is only the breaking down the thin partition that ſeparates this part of my exiſtence, from that to come; in a ſhort time I ſhall know by experience what it is, I ſhall ſtand on the brink of the grave. I am now as happy as this world can make me; friends, fortune, and health, all conſpire to afford me pleaſure, felicity and joy; Still, ſtill, however theſe comforts, even if they laſt my life, muſt at death be parted from me, or rather I from them; ſhall I not then ſecure *future* as well as enjoy a *preſent* happineſs? How dreadful would it be, for death to be the *end* of all my joys, and the *beginning* of all my ſorrows! * in that laſt and ſolemn hour, to look back on a *well ſpent* life, and forward to a crown of glory is comfort indeed! is more than

* To an unregenerate or natural man, dying ſuch, the ſufferings of life, and the pangs of death, are but the beginnings of ſorrow.

than comfort! it is joy inconceivable! the hopes of the righteous ſoul overpay the pains of the body, which ſinks into the grave, with humble expectation of again uniting with the ſoul, and together enjoying, what? an *eternity* of joy; Oh! how would that word weigh on my mind, if I would give it leave to dwell there awhile. Oh! my ſoul! ſhall we indeed never, *never*, part when we meet again. Are we afraid of pain and miſery for a ſhort duration here, and ſhall we not avoid it hereafter? eſpecially as the alternative is an inheritance of joy incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens.

THINK, O my ſoul! and admire the ſtupendous love and condeſcenſion of the great God, Man, MEDIATOR; He that ſitteth on the circle of the earth, and holds it in the hollow of his hands, *even He has died to ſave us:* Let us then with joyful gratitude, enter into his gates with thankſgiving, and into his courts with praiſe; and let thoſe powers which he has given me, be employed to the purpoſe he ſo mercifully beſtows them for, even to my own eternal happineſs; and let me remember, that as I live, ſo I muſt die; and as I die

I die, I muſt be judged at the latter day. Oh! my ſoul, let us as it were, place ourſelves before the judgment ſeat; behold my Redeemer appears to examine the *actions* of my life, the *words* of my mouth, and the *thoughts* of my heart; what!——

HERE I diſturbed her ſtudies, and broke off what ſhe would have added to compleat the awful ſcene ſhe was about to deſcribe. I had an opportunity ſoon after, of learning that ſhe was the ſiſter of a gentleman, who a few months ago died, in the neighbourhood, to whom my friend had given the liberty of ſpending what time ſhe pleaſed in this ſolitary place; as ſoon as I found out who the above paper belonged to, I ſent it her, begging the favour to copy it, which ſhe had the good nature to comply with, as ſhe ſaid, "it was now too late to try to conceal it from me."

THOUGH the foregoing particulars may exceed the bounds of a letter, I doubt not they will be truly acceptable, without apologizing for the length of them, as they hold out the genuine ſentiments

ſentiments and devout ejaculations of a *real Chriſtian.*

Lidford,
Somerſetſhire.
May 3.

I am,
Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

RETIREMENT, FRIENDSHIP, & BOOKS,

A letter to a young gentleman, deſcribing the way to improve a country life ; the bleſſings of real friendſhip, and recommending what books to read for inſtruction and entertainment.*

RETIREMENT.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE manner in which ſome perſons ſpend their time in the country, wholly devoted to

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* Mr. Thompſon in his excellent poem on the ſeaſons, has elegantly ſet forth the pleaſures and happineſs of a *country* life in the following lines, with the requiſites for the enjoyment of it.

An elegant ſufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendſhip, books,
Eaſe and alternate labour, uſeful life,
Progreſſive virtue, and approving heaven.

to the purſuit of field ſports, or the pleaſures of the bottle, is not to be imitated but condemned; for we were created by an all-wiſe Supreme, for higher and nobler ends, than to gratify our appetites and paſſions, in following a continual round of amuſements and diſſipation, or to paſs away our lives in a dull and ſlothful inactivity.

Th' omniſcient Lord of heav'n and earth,
Whoſe nod alone was nature's birth,

Endued his creature, *Man*, with reaſoning powers and faculties, that he might glorify his Maker, adorn his ſtation, and do all poſſible good to his fellow creatures.* We have duties to practiſe and employments to purſue, under the ſeveral characters of probationers for eternity, the loyal ſubjects of the beſt of ſovereigns, members of the community, parents, children, friends, &c. which diſregarding, we forfeit the name of chriſtians, and expoſe ourſelves to the vengeance of a righteous GOD.

I DO

* Thus God and Nature link'd the general frame,
And bade ſelf-love and ſocial be the ſame. *Pope.*

I DO not recommend hunting, ſhooting, and the like diverſions,(*a*)as they appear to me extremely hazardous, and in ſome meaſure cruel. What exerciſe then, you may reply, would you adviſe me to? *Riding*, *walking*, and every other innocent recreation, that while they promote health of body and chearfulneſs of mind, offend not religion, virtue, or morality; or denominate you preſumptuous or hard-hearted.

ABOVE all, take care to keep your thoughts employed on ſerious and inſtructive ſubjects, leſt they prove the occaſion of the worſt of actions. Of all idleneſs, that of the *Mind* is the moſt to be avoided. Reading treatiſes on Divinity, Hiſtory, Ethics, and the ſtudy and practice of the polite Arts, with frequent reflections on the works of Creation, Providence, and Grace, joined to the company and converſation of a few ſelect friends, together with relieving, as far as in your power, the neceſſitous and indigent, will make retirement at all times and in all weathers, welcome, laudable, and improving: without a taſte for the above exerciſes and employments, ſolitude muſt

(*a*) Read Thompſon's Autumn, eſpecially from line 360.

muſt be only a ſtupid, unenviable, and inglorious life*.

FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN poverty, through unforeſeen, and it may be unavoidable diſappointments, loſſes, and misfortunes, in the courſe of buſineſs, reduces the once affluent, ſucceſsful, and induſtrious merchant, into a ſtate of trouble, vexation, and diſtreſs, how welcome muſt the company of a benevolent man, touched with a ſenſe of his fellow creature's melancholy ſituation, be to one in ſuch circumſtances; but how much more pleaſing and acceptable muſt be the gift, when beſtowed by a ſympathizing heart into the lap of famine, ſickneſs, and deſpair; the former is the picture of a real *friend*, the latter the generous effuſion of a ſincere and diſintereſted *friendſhip*.

As

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* Perſons who have a turn for huſbandry and gardening, may always find amuſement and recreation in the receſſes of the country, in all ſeaſons of the year, healthful, innocent, and commendable.

Happy the man, whom bounteous Gods allow,
With his own hands paternal grounds to plow;
Oh! happy, if he knew his happy ſtate,
The ſwain who free from buſ'neſs and debate,
Receives his eaſy food from Nature's hand,
And juſt returns of cultivated land. *Dryden's Virgil.*

As happineſs and miſery are the conſtant attendants on mortality, the enjoyment of the one is heightened, and the ſufferings of the other alleviated by the aid and endearments of a real friend. Though Providence has beſtowed on you riches in abundance,* you would ſtill be unhappy if deſtitute of a *friend*; ſhould he be pleaſed to viſit you with affliction, you might ſtill be happy in the ſympathy of friendſhip; then bleſs the Almighty for giving you the one, and endeavour to merit the continuance of the other. Let univerſal benevolence animate your breaſt, and a noble philanthropy influence your actions; may piety to GOD inſpire you with devotion, and charity to men excite you to liberality.

FRIENDSHIP is that actuating principle of the mind, which ſtimulates a perſon to kind and obliging offices, independent of age, ſex, and condition of life. Should the chill hand of penury damp your enjoyment of the good things of the preſent ſtate, ſhould the pains incident to mortality attack your tenement of clay, and threaten

* The above Letter was written to a young gentleman on his being called into the country, to take poſſeſſion of a large eſtate, left him by a diſtant relation.

threaten its ſpeedy diſſolution; friendſhip can adminiſter comfort in the one caſe, and yield the aſſwaging balm of conſolation in the other. Dr. Young, ſpeaking of the benefits of friendſhip, ſays,

"Lorenzo, haſt thou no friend to ſet thy mind
"abroach?
"Good ſenſe will ſtagnate, thoughts ſhut up want
"air,
"And ſpoil, like bales, unopen'd to the ſun."

A juſt remark, worthy the remembrance and regard of all. The diſtreſs of that man, who on the brink of indigence and ruin, is deſtitute of a friend to commiſerate and aſſiſt him, can be deſcribed no otherwiſe than by ſtiling it inexpreſſibly great and inconceivably affecting: to give an adequate idea of it, I muſt compare the poor wretched and friendleſs creature to an affrighted mariner in a ſtorm, ſurrounded with dangers on every ſide, his veſſel ſhattered by the conflicting elements, without ſails, maſts, or rudder, and every brother ſailor drowned but himſelf; the picture is deeply ſhaded, and yet not exaggerated in the leaſt.*

WHILE

* The *world* in purchaſe of a *friend* is gain, Night Thoughts.

WHILE the ambitious are courting honours, the covetous riches, and the young pleaſures, may it be your and my happineſs to have *real* friends, whoſe conſtant aim may be to prove themſelves worthy our unreſerved confidence and unalterable eſteem; whoſe lives and converſation may be conſonant to the precepts of religion, and ſhew them to the world as *Men* and *Chriſtians*: with ſuch, every earthly bleſſing will be enhanced, every ſorrow leſſened, and every grief allayed; with ſuch, poverty will be ſupportable, and calamities, though ever ſo deplorable, able to be borne; without ſuch deſirable treaſures, the moſt elevated ſtation would be but exalted miſery, and the greateſt fortune the inheritance of diſcontent.

GRANT, O Thou Divine Philanthropiſt! a long continuance of theſe ineſtimable bleſſings to my friend, and teach him to pity even kings, who are daily ſurrounded with none but *flattering* attendants, and addreſt with nothing but the unmeaning compliments of fawning adulation.

FRIENDSHIP, the medicine of life, and a Friend, the phyſician who adminiſters it, under

the influences of Religion, calm the fever of anger, cure the ague of fear, remove the low ſpirits of deſpondency, diſſipate the vapours of doubt, give eaſe in the ragings of trouble, and felicitate the regions of mortality; this invaluable reſtorative is preſerved in an *honeſt* heart, and readily operates by producing an unchangeable affection, ſympathy, and benevolence.

BOOKS.

IN the former part of this letter I recommended for part of your amuſement and employ in your ſolitude and retirement from the cares of buſineſs and the noiſe of the capital, *reading*,* as a rational, improving, and agreeable entertainment. Permit me to remind you on this head, not to run over, in a careleſs or indifferent manner, any author's production, leſt you loſe the benefit of inſtruction; weigh and conſider well what you read, and in order to fix on your mind particular paſſages, new, and worthy your remark, keep pen, ink and paper by you to write them down for your frequent peruſal and remembrance.

TAKE

* *Reading* and *reflection* are the baſis of true wiſdom.
See Thoughts in younger Life.

TAKE particular care what books you chuſe reſpecting *Divinity:* I would adviſe you to peruſe few, if any, treatiſes on *controverſial* points*; ſtudy well the *Scriptures*, and implore wiſdom from on high to lead you into the true ſenſe and meaning of them, for your eternal profit and advantage; be chiefly ſolicitous to be grounded and eſtabliſhed in the moſt eſſential doctrines of faith and practice in religion, without puzzling yourſelf with reſpect to particular modes and ceremonies of worſhip, which ſtrictly adhered to, will only declare you more nice than wiſe. *Try all Things, but hold faſt that which is good.*

Forgive my freedom in offering you advice on this ſubject, as it is deviating from the enquiry what books are moſt worthy your regard, and beſt adapted to elucidate the paths to knowledge, virtue, piety, and happineſs.

* The young gentleman to whom the above was written, had requeſted in a letter to the author, his advice concerning the beſt way to improve a country life, his thoughts on Friendſhip, and what Books were moſt worthy his purchaſe and peruſal.

Deſcription of a ſmall but Uſeful Library *fit for either town or country.*

I WOULD admoniſh you, for your better underſtanding the *ſacred* writings, to conſult *Henry's* or Dr. *Gill's* Expoſition of the Old and New Teſtament; *Poole's* Annotations, and *Doddridge's* Family Expoſitor. To inform your judgement concerning the Goſpel Method of ſalvation, and the benefits of a religious life, read that juſtly admired, though plain narrative, *Bunyan's* Pilgrim's Progreſs, together with *Doddridge's* Riſe and Progreſs of Religion in the Soul; the Whole Duty of Man; *Hervey's* Meditations, and Theron and Aſpaſio; *Bennet's* Chriſtian Oratory; Mrs. *Rowe's* Works; *Henry* on the Sacrament; Dr. *Watts's* Works; *Young's* Night Thoughts; *Flavell's* Works; *Taylor's* Holy Living and Dying; *Sherlock* on Death, Providence, and a future State; Biſhop *Beveridge's* Private Thoughts; *Tillotſon's* Works, and *Baxter's* Saint's Reſt.

FOR your aſſiſtance in ſtudying the works of Nature, conſult *Derham's* Phyſico and Aſtro-Theology; *Ray* on the Creation; Spectacle de la Nature, or Nature Diſplayed; Pearſall's Contemplations

plations and Dialogues; Religious Philoſopher; and *Brown* on the Works of Creation, with his Sunday Thoughts. To ſhew you the value of time, and how to improve it, read Dr. *Young's* True Eſtimate of Human Life; *Lucas's* Enquiry after Happineſs, and *Allen's* Guide to Glory.

To inſtruct you in the principles of morality, the love of virtue, ſelf knowledge, and œconomy, with a guide to the polite arts, ſtudy *Seneca's* Morals; the Spectators, Tatlers, Guardians, and Rambler; *Thomſon's* Seaſons; *Maſon* on Self-Knowledge; the Gentleman's Library; and the Preceptor.

To acquaint yourſelf with the Beauties of Poetry, read *Milton's* Paradiſe Loſt and Regained, *Byſſe's* Art of Poetry, and Dodſley's Collection of Poems, with *Prior's* Poems; *Dryden's* Works; *Churchill's* Poems; *Addiſon's* Cato, *Pomfret's* Laſt Remains, and *Pope's* Art of Criticiſm, in the *firſt* volume of his works.

To improve you in hiſtory, antiquities, the arts and ſciences, biography and converſation, ſtudy *Goldſmith's* Hiſtory of England; *Burnet's* Hiſtory

of his own Times; *Fox's* Book of Martyrs; *Owen's* Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, *Thompſon's* and *Shaw's* Travels; *Jackſon's* Chronological Antiquities; *Martin's* Magazine of Arts and Sciences; *Kennet's* Roman, and *Potter's* Greek Antiquities; *Guthrie's* Hiſtory of all Nations; *Camden's* Britannia; *Salmon's* Gazetteer and *Guthrie's* Geographical Grammar; Dr. *Harris's* Uſe of the Globes; Œconomy of Human Life; *Locke* on Human Underſtanding; *Rollin's* Ancient Hiſtory, and his Method of ſtudying the Belles Lettres; *Richardſon's* Novels; *Plutarch's* Lives; *Mawe's* Every Man his own Gardener; *Bradley* on Huſbandry and Gardening; *Burnet's* Theory of the Earth; *Watſon's* Animal World diſplayed, *Wells's* Aſtronomy, and his Art of Shadows; with the Art of Drawing and Painting in Water Colours, publiſhed by *Kitchen*.

The above books, with *Johnſon's* and *Barclay's* Dictionaries of the Engliſh Language, and a few correct ſheet Maps of the ſeveral parts of the world, will make up a uſeful, valuable, and entertaining library, not merely for *ſhow*, but ſervice, which may afford an agreeable amuſement at all times, eſpecially if you add to them a pair of

of globes, a teleſcope, a microſcope, an air pump, a priſm, a mirror for viewing prints, and an electrifying machine.* I have now, I hope, anſwered your enquiries to your ſatisfaction.

MAY you enjoy the Creator in the creature†, live to his glory here, and after death with him for ever in Heaven, is the earneſt prayer of,

Dear Friend,

Eaſt-End, Finchley. Your's &c.

June 30. THERON, jun.

P. S. Let no time be ſpent without improvement, no day paſs without ſelf-examination, and no amuſement be indulged in, but what may in a greater or leſs degree, be reckoned uſeful, ornamental, manly, and inſtructive.

* *Ferguſon's* ſelect mechanical exerciſes, *Baker's* Treatiſe on the microſcope, and *Martin's* Young Gentleman and Lady's philoſophy, will ſhew you the true uſe and improvement of theſe ſeveral inſtruments and the apparatus belonging to them.

† The man of piety, virtue and diſcretion, however ſurrounded with the bounties of providence, and raiſed above many of his fellow creatures by the gifts of the Moſt High; will ever experience the good things of life, accompanied with a *double* reliſh, while he looks through the bleſſings given, to the bleſſed Giver, and is enabled to *live* as well as *ſpeak* his praiſe.

RURAL SOLITUDE,

OR

THE WISH.

Rura mihi, et rigui placeunt in vallibus amnes. *Virgil.*

SHOULD gracious heav'n in mercy condescend,
My wish to answer and my prayer attend,
A rural cot should be my lone retreat,
Of health the dwelling, and of peace the seat;
In some neat village, near a market town,
Alike remov'd from envy and renown*,
There would I live from noise and tumult free,
To anxious cares a happy stranger be;
There undisturb'd my thoughts should mount on high,
And learn that useful lesson—how to die.
There would I strive to mend my errors past,
And spend each day preparing for my last;
While in the town, where dwell the sons of trade,
Continual off'rings are to riches paid,
And fortunes lost, as well as fortunes made.

AM-

* See the Choice, written by the Rev. Mr. Pomfret.

AMBITION, pride, and greatneſs I diſclaim,
Nor ſeek for honours, titles, wealth, or fame*.
Can theſe procure me health or peace of mind,
When troubles vex, or by diſeaſe confin'd?
Can they with-hold the fatal ſtroke of death,
Or but a moment ſtay the parting breath?
Can they ſecure me from eternal pain,
Or pardon, righteouſneſs, and glory gain?
They can't avail me, for they neither know
To purchaſe happineſs or baniſh woe
Grace, *Health*, *Contentment*, I alone implore,
O grant me theſe, kind Heav'n, I'll aſk no more;
But patient, waiting what remains behind,
I'll live thy praiſes, and I'll die reſign'd. (*a*)

* The poſt of honour is a *private* ſtation. *Addiſon.*

(*a*) O ſacred ſolitude, divine retreat,
Choice of the prudent, envy of the great,
Here, free from ways of men, laid ſafe athore,
We ſmile to hear the diſtant billows roar;
Here, bleſt with health, with buſ'neſs unperplext,
This life we reliſh and inſure the *next*.

Written on a pillar in a gentleman's garden, in the county of Wicklow in Ireland.

Here on the Almighty's works, retir'd, I gaze,
And for their goodneſs, render him the praiſe;
Thus in the Patriarchs' time the Jewiſh ſwains,
Who fed their flocks on Mamre's fruitful plains;
Worſhip'd JEHOVAH in the woods and field,
And prais'd his name for all the fruits they yield;
Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
To guard their nights and ſanctify their days. *Mrs. Rowe.*

SOLITUDE BEST SOCIETY.

OR,

REASONS in Defence of RETIREMENT.

This ſacred ſhade and ſolitude what is it?
'Tis the felt preſence of the Deity,
Few are the faults we flatter when alone. *Dr. Young.*

"HOW delightful are the ſcenes of *rural* nature, eſpecially to the philoſophic eye, and contemplative mind. I cannot wonder that perſons in high life, are ſo fond of retiring from a conſpicuous and exalted ſtation, to the covert of a ſhady grove, or the margin of a chryſtal ſtream; are ſo deſirous of leaving the ſmoaky town and noiſy ſtreet, in order to breathe purer air, and ſurvey the wonders of Creation, in the ſilent, peaceful villa, the undiſturbed abodes of ſolitude and retirement.

"'Tis true, in the country, there are none of the modiſh, I had almoſt ſaid *meretricious* ornaments of that *falſe* politeneſs, which refines people out

out of their veracity but an eaſy ſimplicity of manners, with an unaffected ſincerity of mind. Here the ſolemn farce of ceremony is ſeldom brought into play, and the pleaſing deluſions of compliment have no place, but the brow is the *real* index of the temper, and ſpeech the genuine interpreter of the heart.

"In the country, I acknowledge, we are ſeldom invited to ſee the mimic attempts of human art; but we every where behold the grand and maſterly exertions of divine power. No theatre erects its narrow ſtage, ſurrounds it with puny rows of aſcending ſeats; or adorns it with the ſhifting ſeries of gorgeous ſcenery, but fields extend their ample area; at firſt, lightly clad with a ſcarf of ſpringing green; then deeply planted with an arrangement of ſpindling ſtalks; as a few more weeks advance, covered with a profuſion of bearded or huſky grain; and at laſt, richly laden with a harveſt of yellow plenty.

"Meadows diſcloſe their beautiful boſom; yield a ſoft and fertile lap for the luxuriant herbage, and ſuckle myriads of the faireſt, gayeſt flowers; which, without any vain oſtentation, or jealous

jealous anxiety rival each other in all the elegance of dreſs. Groves, of various leaf, arrayed in freſheſt verdure, and liberal of their reviving ſhade, riſe in amiable, in noble proſpect, all around. Droves of ſturdy oxen, ſtrong for labour, or fat for the ſhambles; herds of ſleeky kine, with milk in their udders and violets in their noſtrils; flocks of well fleeced ſheep, with their ſnowy lambkins, friſking at their ſide; theſe compoſe the living machinery. Boundleſs tracts of bending azure, varniſhed with inimitable delicacy, and hung with ſtarry lamps, or irradiated with ſolar luſtre, form the ſtately cieling; while the early breezes and the evening gales, charged with no unwholeſome vapours, breeding no peſtilential taints, but fanning the humid buds, and waving their odoriferous wings diſpenſe a profuſion of ſweets mingled with the ſovereign ſupports of health.

THIS is the ſchool of induſtry; this the magazine of plenty; and are they not incomparably more delightful, as well as infinitely leſs dangerous, than thoſe ſeminaries of lewdneſs and impiety, where diſſipation wears the maſk of pleaſure? than thoſe temples of profaneneſs and debauchery, where Belial is daily or nightly worſhipped with what

what his votaries call *modiſh* recreation, and genteel amuſement?

HERE indeed is no tuneful voice to melt in ſtrains of amorous anguiſh, and transfuſe the ſickening fondneſs into the hearer's breaſt; no ſkilful artiſt, to inform the lute with muſical enchantment, to ſtrike infectious melody from the viol. and ſooth away the reſolution and activity of virtue, in wanton deſires or voluptuous indolence; but the plains low, the hills bleat, and the hollow-circling rocks echo with the univerſal ſong. Every valley remurmurs to the fall of ſilver fountains, or the liquid lapſe of gurgling rills. Birds, when the chearful morning riſes, or the gentle evening deſcends, perched on a thouſand boughs, play a thouſand airs, wildly, yet ſweetly harmonious; and did ever muſic exceed their untaught ſprightly warblings? or can any colours outvie their gay and gloſſy plumage?

"CHARMED therefore with the fineſt views, lulled with the ſofteſt ſounds, and treated with the richeſt odours; what can be wanting to compleat the delight? here is every entertainment for the eye, the moſt refined gratification for the

ear,

ear, and a perpetual banquet for the ſmell, without any inſidious decoy, for the integitry of our conduct, or even for the purity of our fancy.

"O YE blooming walks and flowery lawns, ſurrounded with dewy landſcapes! how often have patriots and heroes, laid aſide the burthen of power, and ſtole away from the glare of grandeur, to enjoy themſelves in your compoſed retreats? Ye moſſy couches and fragrant bowers, ſkirted with cooling caſcades! how many illuſtrious perſonages, after all their glorious toil for the public good, have ſought an honourable and welcome repoſe in your downy lap?

YE venerable oaks and ſolemn groves! woods that whiſper to the quivering gale! clifts that overhang the darkened floods! who can number the ſages and ſaints, that have devoted the day to ſtudy, or the vacant hour to healthy exerciſe, beneath your ſylvan porticos and waving arches? that far from the dull impertinence of man, have liſtened to the inſtructive voice of GOD, and contemplated the works of his adorable hand, amidſt your moſs-

moſs-grown cells and rocky ſhades*? How inelegant or inſenſible is the mind, which has no awakened lively reliſh for theſe ſweet receſſes, and their exquiſite beauties.

Hervey's Dialogues.

Rural Meditations in favour of Solitude.

"WHEN I walk along my garden, and ſee the trees late ſo blooming and verdant, now diveſted of their honours, and naked of thoſe leaves which lie withering on the ground; it reminds me of the tranſitory ſtate of mortals, and the fleeting ſucceſſion of all things here below. Nor can I help looking upon my fellow creatures, without concern, when full of theſe thoughts I exchange the ſweets of retirement, for the buſy ſcenes of this populous city.

THRONGED with multitudes innumerable as the leaves upon a flouriſhing tree, not one of its preſent

---

* The *contemplative* man, thro' every part of the revolving year, finds new and inſtructive ſubjects for his retired meditations; the flowers of the SPRING, the fruits of SUMMER, the harveſt of AUTUMN, and the dreary Storms of WINTER, all afford matter for reflection in *ſolitude*. See the frontiſpiece.

preſent inhabitants ſhall in a few years remain alive; every individual muſt fall as a leaf; when a new generation ſhall ſpring forth, occupy their places, be buſied for a while in the ſame manner, and then fade away like their forefathers, and leave their places and poſſeſſions to others! important as we may think ourſelves, nothing in nature will witneſs our departure; every thing in life will proceed in its uſual channel. A little, very little time, will wipe us entirely from the tablets of human memory; and the ſtreets, which we now croud ſo buſily, will not be the leſs thronged for our abſence.

WHAT an important leſſon ſhould this reflection teach us, and how much ought it to diminiſh in our eſteem, the tranſitory purſuits and poſſeſſions of this preſent world; but when we conſider farther, that as ſoon as this paſſing moment of life is over, an immortality awaits us, when *eternal* good or evil muſt be the conſequence of our good or evil conduct in this life; how abſurd as well as criminal does it render the actions of thoſe, who with unwearied anxiety, labour to gratify their worldly or ſenſual paſſions!

For

For what are men? calamitous by birth,
They owe their life and nouriſhment to earth;
Like yearly leaves that now with beauty crown'd
Smile on the ſun, now wither on the ground.
"Ah! what a ſtriking likeneſs may we trace
Between the fallen leaves, and mortal race!"
Yet, yet, how few th' important truth receive,
Vain in purſuit, and high in hope they live;
A thouſand fruitleſs ſcenes their thoughts engage,
Alike forgetful, or of death or age;
Toiling while health and ſtrength their pow'r ſup-
With buſy, reſtleſs, fond anxiety! [ply,
Ah! fools and vain! and will they not be wiſe;
Nor know that youth's fair flow'r ſoon fades and
dies,
And life's quick moment like a ſhuttle flies.
But thou, my friend, a better leſſon learn,
And hence inſtructed, mind thy great concern;
To virtue's generous acts thy ſoul apply,
In good more active—as ſo ſoon to die.

The Viſitor.

A Lady's Soliloquy in her Garden.

WElcome fair ſcene, and welcome lov'd retreat,
From the vain hurry of the buſtling great;
Here let me walk, or in this fragrant bower,
Wrap'd in calm thought improve each fleeting hour;
My ſoul (while nature's beauties feaſt mine eyes)
To nature's God contemplative ſhall riſe.
What are ye now, ye glittering vain delights,
That waſte our days and rob us of our nights?
What your allurements? what your fancied joys?
Dreſs, equipage, and ſhow, and pomp, and noiſe,
Alas! how low, how taſteleſs, and how mean,
To the calm pleaſure of this *rural* ſcene?

Come then, ye ſhades, beneath your bending arms,
Encloſe the fond admirer of your charms;
Come then, ye bow'rs, receive your chearful gueſt,
Glad to retire, and in retirement bleſt;
Come, ye fair flowers, and open every ſweet,
Come, little birds, your warbling ſongs repeat;
And O deſcend! to ſweeten all the reſt,
Soft ſmiling Peace, in white rob'd virtue dreſt;
Content unenvious, eaſe with freedom join'd,
And contemplation calm, with truth refin'd:

Deign

Deign but in this fair ſcene with me to dwell,
Then noiſe and nonſenſe, pomp and ſhow farewell;
And ſee, O ſee! the heav'n-born train appear!
Fix then, my heart, thy happineſs is here.

Dodſley.

The true End of Retirement.

"WE cannot have a nobler motive to retirement, than upon the ſcore of *Religion:* To ſhut out the proſpect of *this* world, that we may take the better view of a *future* ſtate, is a prudent precaution. 'Tis certainly good to retreat from company, and bar the door upon diverſions and the ſtrife of tongues; and when we are thus diſengaged, to inſpect our practice, look into our accounts, and examine our condition for *eternity.*

'TIS good to make a ſtand by ourſelves, and conſider how well we are reconciled to a ſtate of ſeparation; things ſtanding thus, we ſhould endeavour to diſentangle our deſires before-hand, to untwiſt our affections, and ſlide off (as it were) from the world by degrees. And ſince the

the objects of time and ſenſe will ſhortly fail us, let us apply to a more laſting fund, and ſubſiſt our happineſs upon thought. To retire for ſuch purpoſes as theſe, is the beſt improvement of ſolitude: to be thus alone, is the way to bring us to the moſt deſirable company. Thoſe who have attained to that ſuperiority of mind, as to be above all anxious worldly cares, tho' they meddle with (as being *of*) the world, yet they do it ſo ſafely, that they cleave not to, nor are afraid to leave it."

Gentleman's Library.

If we only converſe with earth and the things of it, while we are upon it, we ſhall undoubtedly be too much like it; but if by *ſpiritual* and *heavenly* contemplations we frequently get above it in our thoughts and deſires, we ſhall be the more ready, willing, and prepared to take our *laſt* farewell of all its tranſitory pleaſures and enjoyments, and to welcome joys *eternal* and *divine*.

18 NO 67

The AUTHOR's intended EPITAPH, *Written by Himself.*

Here are depoſited the Remains of ——
Who, in a *middle* Station of Life, enjoyed
All that Happineſs and Felicity,
In a SYLVAN RETIREMENT,
Which the
YOUNG, AMBITIOUS, and the GAY
Seek for in vain,
In the purſuit of
Pleaſures, *Honours*, and *Emoluments*.
He lived gratefully ſenſible of the
GIFTS of PROVIDENCE,
And died rejoicing
In the pleaſing Hope, thro' CHRIST,
Of inheriting Eternal Bliſs
In Glory.

Slave to no ſect, who took no private Road,
But look'd thro' Nature up to Nature's God.

Reader, go Home, ſtudy the Bible,
and prepare for Death.

FINIS.

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